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WHEN CHINA WAS GONE: IDENTITIES AND STATES OF THE SHATUO TURKS (895-979)

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WHEN CHINA WAS GONE: IDENTITIES AND STATES OF THE SHATUO TURKS (895-979)

Soojung Han

A DISSERTATION
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Abstract

This dissertation is an ethno-political history examining identity creation and interstate relations across medieval China and Inner Asia. The tenth century has been relegated by traditional Chinese histories as a brief, yet chaotic transitional period centered around the sequential Five Dynasties in North China. Contrary to this dominant narrative, my analysis of excavated materials, paintings, various documents, and diplomatic exchanges—between the Five Dynasties, the Ten Kingdoms, Liao (907-1125), and the Korean kingdoms—reveals a Sino-Inner Asian order with the Inner Asian nomadic group, the Shatuo Turks, at the fore. By fashioning an “elite” identity based on their nomadic roots, the Shatuo Turks legitimated themselves as effective rulers, built multiple states including three of the Five Dynasties and one of the Ten Kingdoms, and ultimately forged a new balance of power across a connected Sino-Inner Asian world. This interstate relations and identity formation of the tenth century marked a watershed in Chinese history by not only establishing precedent for the Covenant of Chanyuan a century later but also fundamentally reshaping the Sino-Inner Asian world for centuries in which Inner Asian nomads could lay claim and rule over China.

Diplomatic exchanges indicate a delicate power-sharing arrangement among three main political centers was preferred to a unipolar hierarchy between the hub and its periphery, a power paradigm made solely possible by the Inner Asian nomadic group, the Shatuo Turks. Therefore, I suggest the post-Tang world to be understood as the “New Three Kingdoms,” refuting the established Sinocentric periodization of the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms” created by the eleventh century literati. Through this portrayal of an interconnected Sino-Inner Asia where inter-state relations and identity were intricately intertwined, I argue that the Shatuo Turks were

the architects of a transregional multipolar hegemony of a world where the ethnic, cultural, and political identities of peoples and states were fluid—when China, as a cultural and political hegemon, was gone.

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Abbreviations

- [CFYG] Wang Qinruo 王欽若 et al., *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994).
- [JNYS] Long Gun 龍袞, *Jiangnan Yeshi* 江南野史 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2019).
- [JTS] Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975)
- [JWDS] Xue Juzheng 薛居正 et al., *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976).
- [LS] Toqto'a 脫脫 et al., *Liao shi* 遼史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974).
- [NTS (L)] Lu You 陸游, *Nan Tang shu* 南唐書 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2009), Mice huihan 秘冊彙函 edition.
- [NTS (M)] Ma Ling 馬令, *Nan Tang shu* 南唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), Congshu jicheng chubian 叢書集成初編 edition.
- [QDGZ] Ye Longli 葉隆禮, *Qidan guozhi* 契丹國志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985).
- [SGCQ] Wu Renchen 吳任臣, *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋 (Zhaowen: Ciyi ge, 1793).
- [WDHY] Wang Pu 王溥, *Wudai Huiyao* 五代會要 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2009), Wuyingdian juzhenban congshu 武英殿聚珍版叢書 edition.
- [XTS] Song Qi 宋祁 and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修. *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975).
- [XWDS] Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974).
- [ZZTJ] Sima Guang 司馬光 et al. (with commentary by Hu Sanxing 胡三省), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956).

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Introduction

In 881, south of the Qin mountains and amongst the rolling plains of Chengdu 成都, Tang Emperor Xizong 僖宗 (r. 873-888) wallowed in despair. He was approximately 700 km southeast of his palace in Chang'an 長安, the capital he was forced to flee. And on his abandoned throne now sat the rebel Huang Chao 黃巢 (835-884) who had declared himself emperor of the new state of Qi 齊. This rebellion, which started in 874 due to cyclic drought and famine which plagued the masses, had finally broken through the last of the capital's defenses. Huang Chao and his forces "washed [the] city" 洗城 with the blood of the sacrificed commoners, while Xizong could do nothing more than escape as his home was commandeered by these uninvited guests. The shame of reliving the history of his ancestor Tang Emperor Xuanzong (r. 713-756), who had similarly fled to Sichuan during the An Lushan rebellion (755-763) over a century prior in 756, was a bitter pill to swallow. More importantly, any hope of return was rapidly dwindling for Xizong as many of his generals had already perished in their attempts to protect or recapture the city. Yet, in these dire straits, one man emerged to avert the collapse of Tang and restore the rule of Xizong. The name of his timely savior was Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908). The young general, Li Keyong, called by Xizong to serve his emperor with assurances of pardons for previous offences, led repeated military victories over the Qi and eventually drove Huang Chao out of the capital by 883. Li Keyong, at the age of 26, was the youngest and most successful out of all the Tang generals who fought with Huang. Due to one of his eyes being smaller than the other, he was referred to as the "One-Eyed Dragon" 獨眼龍.¹ For his heroic

¹ *JWDS* 25:337; *XWDS* 4:32; *ZZTJ* 255:8295.

military feats, later he received a fiefdom and was installed as Prince of Jin 晉王 in 895.² Thanks to Li Keyong, the Tang court was resurrected, albeit for only two more decades.³

Yet, the general Li Keyong was of non-Han ethnicity, specifically, he was Shatuo 沙陀. The Shatuo Turks, whose name means “grand desert,” are known to have been one of the tribal groups of Tujue 突厥, a steppe confederation of the Turkic people in Inner Asia. The Shatuo tribe was considered to be divided into three groups—the Shatuo, Anqing 安慶, and Sage 薩葛—which were loosely referred to by the umbrella ethnonym of Shatuo.⁴ During early Tang, they served in the campaign against Koguryō, one of three Korean kingdoms, and against Xueyantuo 薛延陀, an Inner Asian nomadic group, under the reign of Emperor Taizong 太宗 of Tang (r. 626-649).⁵ In the eighth century, the Shatuo defected to Tibet and resubmitted to Tang. Primarily used by the Tang court as mercenaries, they were especially successful in their military feats and built a hard-earned reputation for their military prowess.⁶ Due to their remarkable campaign in suppressing Pang Xun 龐勛, a leader of one the major rebellions, the Tang court conferred the imperial surname of Li upon the Shatuo leader Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心, who assumed the new name Li Guochang 李國昌 (meaning “a flourishing state”) in 869.⁷ He was the father of Li Keyong.

² *JWDS* 26:353; *ZZTJ* 260:8480.

³ This story is reconstructed based on the record in *ZZTJ*. See *ZZTJ* 254:8245-255:8301.

⁴ Richard Davis, *Fire and ice: Li Cunxu and the Founding of the Later Tang* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 4.

⁵ *JWDS* 25:331.

⁶ Here I use the term “mercenaries” not to specifically focus on soldiers who received “monetary benefits,” but to rather denote a group of people who were used particularly to defend against other nomadic groups. For Shatuo, after they submitted to the Tang court, they actively defended Tang against Tangut, Uyghurs, and Tibet. See *XWDS* 218:6156.

⁷ *JTS* 19a:675; *ZZTJ* 251:8150. Zhuxie is sometimes recorded as Zhuye 朱耶. In this dissertation, I use Zhuxie to refer to the old surname of the Shatuo-Li family.

The Shatuo are not only significant to the understanding of the Tang dynasty, especially with regards to its later half, but also to the next century of Chinese history after the fall of Tang. The collapse of the Tang dynasty heralded the so-called Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period 五代十國 (907-960), considered in traditional historiography to be one of the most chaotic periods in Chinese history. Local militant groups developed power and held influence over all of China. To the north, five sequential dynasties—Later Liang 後梁 (917-923), Later Tang 後唐 (923-937), Later Jin 後晉 (936-947), Later Han 後漢 (947-951), and Later Zhou 後周 (951-960)—were founded in short order and were surrounded by ten regional kingdoms. During this period, Li Keyong's son, Li Cunxu 李存勖 (885-926), created Later Tang, and installed himself as Emperor Zhuangzong 莊宗 (r. 923-926). Further, two more of the Five Dynasties, Later Jin and Later Han, were founded by the Shatuo Turkic people.

A survey of the political history of the Tang dynasty and the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period reveals a world in which the Shatuo Turks held potent influence, and yet, little scholarship to date has focused on the Shatuo. A few scholars have written biographical works on illustrious Shatuo Turkic figures. Richard Davis chronicled the lives of both Zhuangzong and Emperor Mingzong 明宗 (Li Siyuan 李嗣源, r. 926-933) of Later Tang, while Fan Wenli surveyed the life of Li Keyong.⁸ While Wolfram Eberhard briefly covered Shatuo culture in his larger study of medieval Chinese social systems in 1952,⁹ specifics on Shatuo identities and cultures have seldom been studied. Nishimura Yōko's work is especially helpful in exploring the

⁸ Richard Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares: The Later Tang Reign of Emperor Mingzong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014); *Fire and ice: Li Cunxu and the Founding of the Later Tang* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016). Fan Wenli 樊文禮, *Li Keyong pingzhuan* 李克用評傳 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2005).

⁹ Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1952), 140-156.

Shatuo in the Tang dynasty.¹⁰ There have been some ongoing discussions on Shatuo Turkic identity with regards to whether they were Sinicized or not.¹¹ Much of these works focused how the Shatuo Turks became “Han” and ruled over Chinese dynasties. Studies on excavated stone inscriptions of the Shatuo Turks’ descendants in the south have focused on the changes in Shatuo identities, or more specifically, how they became “localized” 本土化.¹² Christopher Atwood’s article also dealt with the Shatuo Turks in his study of the changes to the notion of “tribes” in the eleventh century.¹³ Recently, Maddalena Barengi has worked on the origins and identity of the Shatuo Turks. Her 2019 article about the representation of Shatuo Turkic origins covered various origin stories and argued that the story of their migration during the eighth and ninth centuries

¹⁰ Nishimura Yōko 西村陽子, *Tōdai sada tokketsushi no kenkyū* 唐代沙陀突厥史の研究, (Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2018).

¹¹ The Sinicization of the Shatuo Turks were studied by Fu Lecheng in 1977. See Fu Lecheng 傅樂成, “Shatuo zhi hanhua,” in *Han Tang shilun ji* 漢唐史論集 (Taibei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1977), 319–38. This scholarship and view has been widely accepted by many Chinese scholars who have continued working on the topic. See Li Fengmin 李鋒敏, “Tang Wudai shiqi de Shatuo hanhua” 唐五代時期的沙陀漢化, *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肅社會科學 no. 3 (1999): 49-52 and Wang Xusong 王旭送, “Shatuo hanhua zhi guocheng” 沙陀漢化之過程, *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究 no. 3 (2010): 14-22; Wang Xusong, “Lun Shatuo de hanhua” 論沙陀的漢化, *Sanxia daxue xuebao* 三峽大學學報 33, no. 1 (2011): 103-108; Niu Yu 牛雨 “Li Keyong muzhi xinkao—jianlun Li Keyong de guanzhi he hanhua” 李克用墓誌新考—兼論李克用的官職和漢化, *Xinzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* 忻州師範學院學報 31, no. 3 (2015): 96-101. Zhao Rongzhi 趙榮織 and Wang Xusong’s book, *Shatuo jianshi* 沙陀簡史, also includes a chapter, “Shatuo de hanhua ji qi fenbu quyu” 沙陀的漢化及其分布区域 dedicated to the Sinicization of the Shatuo Turks. See Zhao Rongzhi and Wang Xusong, *Shatuo jianshi* (Wulumuqi Shi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2015), 154-170.

¹² Hu Yaofei 胡耀飛, “Yang Wu zhengquan Daibei jiazu de bentuhua-yi ‘Li Song muzhi’ suojian yanwen Lishi weili” 楊吳政權代北家族的本土化-以《李晟墓誌》所見雁門李氏為例, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 no.1 (2018): 166-175.

¹³ Christopher Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” in Denise Aigle, Isabelle Charleux et al., eds., *Miscellanea Asiatica: Festschrift in Honour of François Aubin* (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2010)

was enhanced in their biography, portraying them as “subjugated barbarians.”¹⁴ Two other articles authored by Barenghi have explored Shatuo’s military identity in the ninth century.¹⁵

Some works have directly explored questions of ethnicity in China during this period. Rong Xinjiang’s work crucially provided clues concerning the emergence of non-Han peoples in the frontier zones. He argued that following the An Lushan rebellion, elite Tang society exhibited an anti-Hu trend, focusing on the Sogdians who created a fake Han genealogy and moved to Hebei 河北.¹⁶ Deng Xiaonan argued that the ethnic distinction during Tang was between Han 漢 and *hu* 胡, while that of Song was *hua* 華 and *yi* 夷. According to Deng, this transition was due to the various amalgamations of ethnic groups, urgent political issues of the time, the emergence of steppe people, and the rise of neo-Confucianism.¹⁷ Deng’s work provides vital analysis of the changes to the ethnic amalgamation of groups and the differing ethnic distinctions. In terms of broader medieval Chinese ethnicity studies, Abramson published a book on ethnic identity in Tang¹⁸ and recently Shao-yun Yang has examined the debates on Chinese-barbarian dichotomy during Tang and Song.¹⁹ Abramson’s book explored how non-Han “ethnicity” was observed and how “identity” was formulated during the Tang dynasty. Yang’s work focused on the ways in which Tang and Song philosophers used literati works and

¹⁴ Maddalena Barenghi, “Representations of Descent: Origin and Migration Stories of the Ninth- and Tenth-century Turkic Shatuo,” *Asia Major* 32, no. 1 (2019): 53-86.

¹⁵ Maddalena Barenghi, “The Making of the Shatuo: Military Leadership and Border Unrest in North China’s Daibei (808–880),” *Central Asiatic Journal* 63, no. 1-2 (2020): 39-70; “North of Dai: Armed Communities and Military Resources in Late Medieval China (880-936),” *Annali di Ca’ Foscari. Serie orientale* 57 (2021): 373-396.

¹⁶ Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, “An-Shi zhi luan hou sute huren de dongxiang,” 安史之亂後粟特胡人的動向, *Jinan shixue* 暨南史學 2 (2003): 102-123.

¹⁷ Deng Xiaonan 鄧小南, *Zuzong zhi fa: Beisong qianqi zhengzhi shulüe* 祖宗之法: 北宋前期政治述略 (Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2006), 78-102.

¹⁸ Marc Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Shao-yun Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (2019).

Confucian texts to explore “Chineseness” and “barbarianism,” and in this way, demonstrated the fluidity of “ethnicity” and “identity.”

Building on these previous works on ethnicity and identity in medieval China, and on the Shatuo Turks, my dissertation explores the origins and rise of the Shatuo Turks, and the role they played in the political order of the time. My dissertation first asks questions such as: How did the Shatuo identify themselves? What made someone Shatuo? How were they perceived by others? And what strategies did they use to legitimize themselves as rulers in the Five Dynasties period? In this search for Shatuo identity, I adopt approaches to ethnicity and ethnic identity from European medieval studies, specifically concepts dealing with the “barbarian kingdoms” of the post-Roman worlds. In my examination of Shatuo identity, I borrow from the concept of *Traditionskerne* or “kernel of tradition,” from German historian Reinhard Wenskus.²⁰ Wenskus argued that Germanic groups in antiquity shared a small elite nucleus group which maintained the core traditions of the entire group. Similarly, the Li family formed the core group and played the role of *kernel* for the umbrella Shatuo group, becoming “elite” amongst the Shatuo people. Further, I consider certain criteria to scrutinize Shatuo identity including “language,” “arms and ways of fighting,” “costume,” and “hairstyles and body signs,” which were used by contemporaries to gauge ethnicity.²¹

This ethnopolitical history of the Shatuo Turks contributes to a new understanding of ethnicity and identity in the medieval period. I challenge previous assumptions of one-sided

²⁰ Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Köln: Böhlau, 1961).

²¹ Walter Pohl, “Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity,” in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, eds. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 17-69.

assimilation processes which have been discussed in the course of Sinicization.²² Historians framed the Shatuo Turks as having been Sinicized while traditional dynastic histories viewed the Shatuo Turks as “barbarians (*yidi*).”²³ These arguments which tout simple one-sided acculturation show inherent biases to facilitate the underlying motives, presumably nationalism, of the writers rather than delicately approaching the nuanced topics of ethnicity and identity, especially in the case of the Shatuo Turks. I argue that much of prior literature on the Shatuo has its foundations in the perspectives of historical compilers during the Song dynasty. Instead, I find that the Shatuo Turks were widely acknowledged as legitimate rulers by a Sino-Inner Asian society that was aware of and accepted the mingling of diverse polities, ethnicities, and cultures, in contrast to the Song literati’s insistence of a hierarchy topped by the superior “Han Chinese.” Ethnicity and related matters of cultural identity are central not only to the rise of the Shatuo Turks, who were crucial to the makings of the political hegemony, but also to the establishment of the two dynasties, Song and Khitan Liao, that dominated the following centuries.

After deliberating the underpinnings of Shatuo origins and identity, I examine the influence the Shatuo Turks had on the transregional political arena of the tenth century. Scholars have considered the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period as a transitional period or

²² My idea of rejecting one-sided “Sinicization” or “barbarization” is heavily influenced by Park Han-je. In his “Sino-Barbarian Synthesis” (Hohan ch’eje, 胡漢體制) theory which he created in the early 1980s, he argue that the Sui-Tang dynasty was created based on the conversion of the Han *and hu* cultures, rejecting the notion of one-sided “Sinicization.” This theory can be seen in his recent publications. Park explored his theory from political and social perspectives, respectively. See Pak Han-je 박한제, *Chungguk chungse hohan ch’eje ūi chōngch’ijōk chōn’gae* 중국중세 호한체제의 정치적 전개 (Sōul: Ilchogak, 2019); *Chungguk chungse hohan ch’eje ūi sahoejōk chōn’gae* 중국중세 호한체제의 사회적 전개 (Sōul: Ilchogak, 2019). He also explored the city structure of the Chinese medieval period from the perspective of the “Sino-Barbarian Synthesis.” See Pak Han-je, *Chungguk chungse tosōng kwa hohan ch’eje* 중국 중세도성과 호한체제 (Sōul: Sōul Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’an Munhwawōn, 2019). In this book, he argued that the city structure of Chang’an was heavily influenced by the nomadic culture of the Northern Dynasties.

²³ For example, Song historian Ouyang Xiu categorized the Shatuo people as “barbarians (*yidi*).” See *XWDS* 4:40.

interregnum.²⁴ Those who have focused on the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period have chiefly explored military activities and political structures. After Wang Gungwu published his book on the military and political institutions of this time,²⁵ Peter Lorge explored the period through important wars such as the Battle of Gaoping in 954 and Huainan campaign (955-957).²⁶ Also, Fang Cheng-Hua analyzed the transition from military identity during the Five Dynasties period to civil elite identity in Song.²⁷

In my exploration of this period, I place the Five Dynasties back into the post-Tang world of uncertain power and diplomacy that involved not only the Ten Kingdoms but also other border polities including the nomadic superpower of the Liao. I unravel the obscurity of the political order by examining the rhetoric of diplomatic exchanges among the states. The political dynamics of the time can be clearly observed through the deployment of various diplomatic language which was used to subtly or explicitly claim superiority over the recipient. A thorough analysis of excavated materials, paintings, and diplomatic exchanges among the Five Dynasties, Liao, the Ten Kingdoms, and other borderland states known as the “Four Barbarians (*siyi*

²⁴ As written in the “Introduction” of *Cambridge History of China* Vol.5, “... the picture of chaos and political disorder that has long dominated our understanding of the transitional epoch separating T’ang and Sung must now yield to a view of the Five Dynasties in the north and nine kingdoms in the south as an era of robust state building that laid the foundation for unification under the Sung.” See Paul Smith, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge History of China: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279, Volume 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4. This demonstrates how historians have viewed the Five Dynasties period. Hugh Clark’s book exploring the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period is titled “China during the Tang-Song ‘Interregnum,’ 878-978.” See Hugh Clark, *China during the Tang-Song Interregnum, 878-978: New Approaches to the Southern Kingdoms* (Routledge, 2022).

²⁵ In this book, Wang argued that many achievements including the institutional innovations of Song Taizu initially appeared during the Five Dynasties Period. See Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

²⁶ Peter Lorge, *War, Politics and Society in Early Modern China* (London: Routledge, 2005), 17-29.

²⁷ Fang Cheng-Hua, *Power Structures and Cultural Identities in Imperial China: Civil and Military Power from Late Tang to Early Song Dynasties (A.D. 875–1063)* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009).

四夷)”²⁸ in traditional Chinese historiography, reveals a Sino-Inner Asian order across a pan-Asian world from Inner Asia to the Korean peninsula. Specifically, a power-sharing arrangement among three main political centers was preferred to a unipolar hierarchy between the hub and its periphery, a power paradigm made possible by the Inner Asian nomadic group, the Shatuo Turks. In doing so, I challenge the Sinocentric periodization of the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms” developed by Song historians, primarily Xue Juzheng 薛居正 (912-981) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), which situates North China at the center and relegates other regions to the periphery.

By folding matters of ethnicity and identity into my study of the inter-state relations and power structure of this period, I bring significance to the Shatuo Turks while also contributing to a rethinking of the Tang-Song transition thesis, the dominant framework in scholarly understanding of the medieval period developed by Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (Naitō Torajirō, 1866-1934).²⁹ Naitō Konan claimed that there was a clear distinction between Tang and Song, separating them into the respective periods of medieval and early modern.³⁰ The Tang-Song transition has recently earned considerable attention with scholars debating and building on the

²⁸ Traditional Chinese histories recorded the various peoples living outside the borders as “Four Barbarians” (*siyi* 四夷). Here, my use of the “Four Barbarians” refers to peoples living outside of Five Dynasties, Ten Kingdoms, and Liao. Specifically, I deal with the relations between the Five Dynasties and the Korean kingdoms (Koryō and Shilla).

²⁹ For recent debates on “Tang-Song Transition” thesis, see *Journal of Chinese Humanities*’s 6th volume, which is a special issue for the “Limitations of the Tang-Song Transition theory.” See Mou Fasong, “A Discussion of Several Issues Concerning the ‘Tang-Song Transition’,” *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 6 (2020): 192-212; Yang Jiping, “Dispelling the Myth of the ‘Tang-Song Transition Theory,’” 129-152.

³⁰ The differences between the two periods are: (1) the destruction of the aristocracy and the rise of despotic government, (2) the change in status of the emperorship, (3) the establishment of emperorship, (4) the change of status of commoners, (5) the systemic changes of appointment of officials, (6) the change of traits of factional cliques, (7) the change of the economy, (8) and the change of culture. See Naito Torajiro 内藤虎次郎, *Chūgoku Chūseishi* 中國近世史 (Kyōto: Kōbundō, 1947).

Tang-Song transition thesis.³¹ In 2022, Hugh Clark published a book which offered a “southern perspective” of the transition.³² My exploration instead charts a “northern perspective” to the Tang-Song transition by showing that many of the seismic changes of the medieval period could in fact have been shaped by the identity formation and politics in the North starting from the ninth century.

Finally, in the process of highlighting the inseparable nature of non-Han groups and Chinese history, I problematize the meaning of “China” (Zhongguo 中國), in an era of political fragmentation. “Zhongguo,” the contemporary Chinese name for China which I translate as the “Middle Kingdom,” has been used conventionally to refer to identities and political entities tied to the current Chinese mainland. Accordingly, nation-states such as Taiwan (ROC) and China (PRC) adopted “Middle Kingdom” in their nation names, and the identities of people of the Pan-Chinese world have inevitably been intertwined with the idea of the “Middle Kingdom.” Some scholars have revisited the meaning of “China” in historical contexts. For example, Hu Axiang analyzed the designation of “Zhongguo” from antiquity to present-day.³³ On the other hand, Ge Zhaoguang revisited the meaning of “China” through its relations with neighboring Asian states and by utilizing the four categories of territory, ethnicity, culture, and history.³⁴ In his most

³¹ The existence of aristocracy was one of the themes of Naito Konan’s transition thesis. Nicolas Tackett explored the changes to the medieval aristocracy during the Tang dynasty. He argued that medieval aristocracy survived until the Huang Chao rebellion and that the social and economic destructions due to the rebellion led to the demise of the aristocracy. See Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

³² Hugh Clark argued that after demise of the Tang dynasty, the autonomous kingdoms in the south brought the cultural and economic transformations of the Song dynasty. Clark, *China during the Tang-Song Interregnum, 878-978*, 100-108.

³³ Hu Axiang 胡阿祥, *Weizai siming: “Zhongguo” gujin chengwei yanjiu* 偉哉斯名:“中国”古今稱謂研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000).

³⁴ Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Zhai zi Zhongguo: chongjian youguan “Zhongguo” de lishi lunshu* 宅兹中國: 重建有關「中國」的歷史論述 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011); *He wei Zhongguo: jiangyu, minzu, wenhua yu lishi* 何為中國: 疆域, 民族, 文化與歷史 (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014).

recent book, Ge analyzed “China” through the lens of the “periphery” and emphasized that “China” had been created through the gradual change of its “interior” and “exterior.”³⁵ Building on the works of Hu and Ge, my approach to medieval Chinese history historicizes and problematizes “Zhongguo” as a heuristic category in thinking about the continuity of Chinese history. Thus, discovering the “Middle Kingdom” of the Five Dynasties period becomes crucial in my pursuit to understand the relations between the states of Sino-Inner Asia. In this exploration, I use “North China” to refer to the geographical area specifically restricted to the Central Plain region, Central Plain (*zhongyuan* 中原) region, the lower and middle reaches of the Yellow River. It is important to note that due to a lack of comparable terms, I use the term “Chinese” in a limited manner to refer to the sources providing Han perspectives.

In addition to addressing existing scholarship on the Shatuo Turks, this dissertation also contributes to our understanding of three key issues in Chinese history: 1) Sinicization, 2) ethnicity, and 3) the tributary system.

Problems with the Sinicization Thesis

The Qing historian Evelyn Rawski wrote in 1996 that “‘Sinicization’—the thesis that all of the non-Han peoples who have entered the Chinese realm have eventually been assimilated into Chinese culture—is a twentieth-century Han nationalist interpretation of China’s past. Removing Sinicization as a central theme in Chinese historiography focuses our attention on the research agenda ahead.”³⁶ After the establishment of “New Qing History,” western scholarship defined

³⁵ Ge Zhaoguang, “The ‘Interior’ and the ‘Exterior’ in Historical China: A Re-clarification of the Concepts of ‘China’ and the ‘Periphery,’” *Chinese Studies in History* 51, no. 1 (2018): 4-28.

³⁶ Evelyn Rawski, “Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): 842.

Sinicization as a nationalistic movement. Two decades later, Li Zhiting criticized the “New Qing History” approach as “new imperialist history.”³⁷ My aim here is not to debate the merits or critiques of “New Qing History,” but rather illustrate the continued scholarly interest and debates on the topic of “Sinicization.”

The Sinicization of non-Han rulers in the early medieval period has generally been accepted in the field.³⁸ This perspective stems from the fact that many of the non-Han rulers adopted Han surnames and systems of government. For instance, when Liu Yuan 劉淵 (r. 304-310) of Xiongnu 匈奴 background established Former Zhao 前趙 (304-329) during the Five Barbarians and Sixteen Kingdoms period 五胡十六國 (304-439), he claimed a lineage tracing back to the Han dynasty. While the Han court did engage in a marriage alliance with the Xiongnu, his genealogical connection with the Han imperial family was a myth. Following in his footsteps, ensuing rulers of Former Zhao also actively adopted the Han/non-Han dual institutional system.

Following the Five Barbarians and Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties periods (304-589), the Tang dynasty welcomed a multicultural society. However, the second half of the dynasty after the An Lushan rebellion saw a rise of xenophobic sentiment.³⁹ Notably, this

³⁷ Li Zhiting, “‘New Qing History’: An Example of ‘New Imperialist’ History,” *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 47, no. 1 (2016): 5-12.

³⁸ Zhang Jin 張晉, “Shixi Liu Yuan qibing xing Han de yuanyin” 試析劉淵起兵興漢的原因, *Lüliang xueyuan xuebao* 呂梁學院學報, no. 3 (2014): 58-60; Dong Gang 董剛, “Xiongnu Hanguo hanhua wenti bianxi” 匈奴漢國漢化問題辨析, *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肅社會科學, no. 4 (2018): 213-221.

³⁹ This study is focused on the Sogdian community in the Tang dynasty as An Lushan was Sogdian. Étienne de la Vaissière argued that after the An Lushan rebellion, there was a trend of excluding Sogdians resulting in Sogdians hiding their identity. Étienne de la Vaissière, *Histoire des marchands sogdiens* (Paris: Collège de France et Institut des Hautes Études chinoise, 2002). The same book is translated in English. Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005). Rong Xinjiang also agreed that there was a difference in the treatment of Sogdians before and after the rebellion. See Rong, “An-Shi zhi luan hou sute huren de dongxiang,” 102-123.

assumption of xenophobia in the second half of the Tang dynasty has recently been contested.⁴⁰

During this period, the Shatuo Turks rose from migrants to mercenaries to generals to court officials, and finally, to rulers, becoming a significant political force in the Tang court. However, much of their success is diminished by modern scholars who argue that the Shatuo Turks were Sinicized, thus “Chinese.” There are two main reasons for this assumption. First, the founders of each successive Shatuo dynasty adopted the administration systems from Tang. Second, Later Tang rulers used a surname granted by the Tang court which is considered to have been one of the markers they used to legitimize themselves as Chinese rulers. In addition to these reasons, the adoption of Han children, marriages with Han woman, and education on Han culture were also considered as signs of Sinicization.⁴¹

However, an analysis of the records instead points to a reality in which the Shatuo rulers preserved their own identity. For example, during the Later Tang dynasty, the emperors practiced their own Turkic rituals at the tops of mountains alongside their practice of Chinese rituals. Sources show that during the reign of Mingzong of Later Tang, Mingzong performed rituals for the “Turkic god” (Tujue *shen* 突厥神) or “foreign god” (*fanshen* 蕃神). According to Eberhard, the rituals at the top of the mountain were typical Turkish religious practices.⁴² Non-Han Buddhist practices were also performed in caves, resembling the cave cult practices of the Tuoba

⁴⁰ Shao-yun Yang, “Unauthorized Exchanges: Restrictions on Foreign Trade and Inter-marriage in the Tang and Northern Song Empires,” Paper for the 2021 AAS Annual Conference, Boston Panel: “After the Heavenly Qaghans: Multi-Ethnic Approaches to the Tang-Song Transition,” March 21-26 [unpublished] (2021). In this article, through the analysis of law restrictions, Yang argued that in contrast to the standard narrative, ethnic prejudice and xenophobia had already existed in early Tang.

⁴¹ Li Yulin 李玉林, “Yidai haoqiu Li Keyong de hanhua 一代豪酋李克用的汉化,” *Xinzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* 24, no. 1 (2008): 73-76.

⁴² Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China*, 144-146.

clan 拓拔部 during the fourth century. Moreover, the Shatuo emperors spoke “foreign language” (*fanyu* 蕃語 or *huyu* 胡語).

In my dissertation, I find that the Shatuo’s preservation of kinship and nomadic traditions was crucial to their rise and resilience as a non-Han group. Particularly, I re-examine the legitimization tactics which scholars have pointed to in their claim of Shatuo Sinicization. The Shatuo’s acceptance of the Tang administration system should be viewed as a method in which to legitimize themselves as the successors to Tang, rather than a process of Sinicization. In doing so, my project challenges this one-sided acculturation process and questions the dominant Sinocentric narrative.

Ethnicity as a Toolkit and Its Limitation

Ethnicity is a modern concept tied to the concept of nation-state.⁴³ Applications of the concept of ethnicity to medieval China has been questioned by many scholars, including Naomi Standen. Standen emphasizes that ethnicity during the tenth century is difficult to distinguish from political identity or cultural identity.⁴⁴ Defining ethnicity is indeed problematic. Walter Pohl points out that there are three reasons. First, ethnic groups are not coherent. Second, many ethnic groups consider other groups of people as ethnic groups but do not consider themselves as such.

⁴³ Here, I do not go over the scholarship defining ethnicity or ethnic identity in the modern period. There had been debates on whether the modern concepts of race and ethnicity can be comparable to those of the medieval world. See Robert Bartlett “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31, No. 1 (2001): 39-56. In this article, Bartlett explains that the modern concepts of ethnicity and race are not identical to those of the medieval period, but the people in the medieval world used “ethnicity” to distinguish people.

⁴⁴ Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 28.

And third, scant literature explicitly mentions how to define “ethnicity.”⁴⁵ However, what is clear is that people of the medieval period did perceive such differences amongst peoples based on their own criteria.

In my dissertation, I consider ethnicity as a tool that can contribute to the construction of identity during this period. I admit that making a distinction between ethnic identity and cultural identity is extremely challenging, because cultural identity itself might have been constructed based on ethnicity. Moreover, in medieval Europe, ethnic identity was a “situational construct.”⁴⁶ The categories to gauge or form an ethnic identity, such as genealogy, language, custom, law, food, and hairstyle were variable and dependent on the individual’s own identification during this period. Murals found in the Dunhuang area show that Chinese aristocrats chose to wear Tibetan costumes after the region was occupied by the Tibetan Empire.⁴⁷ Changing surnames or genealogies may have also helped to conceal ethnic disparities. Such cases can be seen through the epitaphs of the Sogdians.

Furthermore, sometimes it is difficult to know how people perceived themselves if multiple markers appeared. For example, a man from Western Xinjiang might speak both Chinese and non-Han languages, dress like a Han, and claim an Inner Asian ritual. In this case, we might not be able to succeed in gauging his ethnicity or ethnic identity, which was the case for Mingzong, the second ruler of the first Shatuo dynasty. It is not clear whether all the rulers of

⁴⁵ Walter Pohl, “Introduction,” in *Strategies of Identification: Early Medieval Perspectives*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 12-24. He also mentioned that “kinsgroup,” “ethnographic categories,” “territorial and regional identities,” “urban identities,” “armies, army units, and war-bands,” “religious identities,” “political identities,” “the example of Romanness,” are the social distinction which include similar characteristics with ethnic groupings.

⁴⁶ Patrick Geary, “Ethnic Identity as Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages,” *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983): 15-26.

⁴⁷ Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 64-105.

Later Tang, Later Jin, and Later Han were bilingual. However, what is clear is that they perceived themselves as non-Han by identifying themselves as *fan* or foreigner, even though they had been using the Tang imperial surname for generations. In this case, they might have outwardly claimed Chinese political identity, yet preserved their Shatuo identity.

In my dissertation, as I acknowledge the abovementioned problems regarding ethnicity and ethnic identity, I use “intersectionality” as an analytical framework to understand the interconnected nature of social categorizations of peoples.⁴⁸ In this way, I do not select one’s identity based on one category but consider several factors in combination. In this way, although I am limited in my ability to perfectly define the limits of Shatuo Turkic ethnicity, I point to several different forms of Shatuo identity.

Inter-State Relations Through the “Tributary” or “Treaty” System

The tributary system was one of the main forms of diplomatic relations that China engaged in with non-Chinese states from the ancient period. In his introduction to *China among Equals*, Morris Rossabi wrote, “An ideal vehicle for relations with foreigners was the tribute system. In order to deal with the Chinese, foreign rulers were required to send tribute embassies periodically to the Chinese emperor.”⁴⁹ During the medieval period, foreign rulers were also aware of the patterns and processes of the tribute system. This tribute system was derived from the domestic order, which featured a political and social hierarchy. After Fairbank systemized

⁴⁸ “Intersectionality” has been a useful tool in the field of Feminist Studies with regard to Black feminism. For the details about intersectionality, see *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴⁹ Morris Rossabi, “Introduction,” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 2.

the tributary system as the “Chinese world order,”⁵⁰ scholars in the field have recognized the merits of the tributary system.

When states recognized each other as equals, the tributary system did not function, and in these cases, treaties were often signed between the two parties. The relations between Song and Liao were dealt with under this framework. The Song-Liao relations were explored with respect to their equality after the Covenant of Chanyuan in 1005. Wang Gungwu argued that after the Covenant of Chanyuan, Song was a “lesser empire” compared to Liao, signaling a collapse of the Chinese world order during this period.⁵¹ Tao Jing-shen argued that both Song and Liao were fully aware of their equality in which they were literally the “two sons of heaven.”⁵² David Wright agreed that Song and Liao had equal relations and articulated that it was *force majeure*, a mainly Chinese characteristic inside the Liao society, which brought Song and Liao to the negotiation table.⁵³ Recently, Nicholas Tackett introduced “the East Asian Order” based on the Song-Liao relations.⁵⁴

In terms of Tang foreign relations, many scholars have agreed that Tang held a superior status over other foreign states, especially during the early period. After defeating the Eastern Turks, Tang emperors were not only emperors of agrarian “China,” but also were rulers over the steppe region. Recently, a few scholars have questioned Tang’s supremacy over the Turks.

⁵⁰ John Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1-19.

⁵¹ Wang Gungwu, “The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire,” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 61-62.

⁵² Tao Jin-sheng, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988).

⁵³ David Curtis Wright, *From War to Diplomatic Parity in Eleventh-Century China: Sung’s Foreign Relations with Kitan Liao* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁵⁴ Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Jonathan Skaff argued that the Tang and the Turko-Mongol courts shared the common concept of patron-client relationship when dealing with their own tributary systems. He demonstrated that the patron-client relationship, which “originates as the extension of the authority of the patriarchal household to a larger realm,” was the key to comprehending the political phenomena of the two separate worlds of the Sui-Tang and the Turko-Mongol empires.⁵⁵ Wang Zhenping suggested that Tang was one of the many players in a multipolar world, recognizing that other states also participated in the lord-vassal relation with Tang and these other states benefited from the relations. He demonstrated that the relations were flexible because the Tang court could use both soft and hard power which eventually brought about “pragmatic pluralism.”⁵⁶

As can be seen, the tributary or treaty system is a crucial measure in the evaluation of relations between states, and yet, relations between the Five Dynasties and other states have not been actively studied under these frameworks. Hino Kaizaburō, who wrote a general history of the Five Dynasties period, dealt with the relations among the states, primarily concerning himself with the history of warfare.⁵⁷ For example, Liao was an independent state with considerable power which practiced tributary relations with the Five Dynasties. In 907, after consolidating their eight tribal groups, their ruler Abaoji (872-926) initiated diplomacy with Later Liang. Even before his consolidation of his tribal groups, he forged a brotherly covenant with Shatuo Li Keyong. With ensuing dynasties in the north, Liao maintained at least an equal relationship with the Five Dynasties, while even becoming more dominant at times.

⁵⁵ Skaff used “patron-client relationship” based on Weber’s patrimonialism. See Jonathan Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12-15.

⁵⁶ Wang Zhenping, *Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia: A History of Diplomacy and War* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2013), 6-10.

⁵⁷ Hino Kaizaburō 日野開三郎, *Godaishi no kichō* 五代史の基調 (Tōkyō: San’ichi Shobō, 1980), 361-432.

Rhetoric used in the sources to reflect the diplomatic exchanges of the time reveal whether the relationship was hierarchical or equal. Through analyzing the extant diplomatic documents, I find that the relations between Five Dynasties and Liao influenced eleventh century Sino-Inner Asian diplomacy. In this way, I question the idea of “China among equals,” argued by scholars in the 1980s, regarding the relationship between Song and Liao. Elements constituting the Covenant of Chanyuan can be similarly seen in the relations between Liao and Five Dynasties, marking a new paradigm from the so-called “Chinese world order.”

Source Materials

Official Histories

The period pertaining to the Shatuo dynasties is mainly recorded in two official dynastic histories, the *Old History of the Five Dynasties* (*Jiu Wudai shi* [JWDS] 舊五代史) and the *New History of the Five Dynasties* (*Xin Wudai shi* [XWDS] 新五代史). JWDS was compiled by Xue Juzheng between 973 and 974, and contains official documents written by historians during the Five Dynasties period, while XWDS was compiled by Ouyang Xiu between 1036 and 1053. Even though it is well-known that the *Xin Wudai shi* included additional materials, some words were purposefully altered, especially when used to describe the Five Dynasties’ tributary relations with Liao. In addition to these two official histories compiled under the Song court, Sima Guang’s 司馬光 the *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (*Zizhi Tongjian* [ZZTJ] 資治通鑑) which was compiled in 1084 added more than three hundred sources.⁵⁸ The *Outstanding*

⁵⁸ Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China*, 37.

Models from the Storehouse of Literature (*Cefu yuangui* [CFYG] 冊府元龜), compiled by Wang Qinruo 王欽若 in 1013, provides many pertinent supplementary sources on administration and policies.

On the other hand, the *History of Liao* (*Liao shi* [LS], 遼史), compiled by Toqto'a (1314-1356) during the Yuan 元 dynasty, is a significant medium in which to understand the Liao perspective. Although compiled approximately two hundred years after the collapse of Liao, earlier Liao sources such as *Veritable Records of Imperial Dynasty* (*huangchao shilu* 皇朝實錄) by Yelü Yan 耶律儼 (d. 1113) were included in the compilation.⁵⁹ This source should be considered to align more closely with the perspective of Liao than the other two *Histories of Five Dynasties*. The *Chronicle of the Khitan Kingdom* (*Qidan guozhi* [QDGZ] 契丹國志), compiled by Ye Longli 葉隆禮 during the Southern Song dynasty in the mid to late thirteenth century, also includes various Song records of the Khitans.

With regard to the early Shatuo, I take a close comparative approach to the *Old History of Tang* (*Jiu Tang shu* [JTS] 舊唐書, compiled by Liu Xu 劉昫) and the *New history of Tang* (*Xin tang shu* [XTS] 新唐書, compiled by Song Qi 宋祁 and Ouyang Xiu in 1060) to trace the origins of the Shatuo Turks. Because *JTS* was compiled under the Later Jin court, it becomes crucial in the search for Shatuo self-identification. *JTS* gives voice to the Shatuo in ways that other traditional Chinese sources struggle to accomplish.

Unofficial Histories

⁵⁹ LS 98:1416.

In addition to using the official histories, I use various unofficial historical records. I use three unofficial or privately compiled records in my analysis of the history of Southern Tang. Lu You's 陆游 *History of Southern Tang* (*Nan Tang shu* [NTS-L] 南唐書) and Ma Ling's 馬令 *History of Southern Tang* (*Nan Tang shu* [NTS-M] 南唐書), which were both published in the twelfth century, alongside Long Gun's 龍衮 *Unofficial History of Jiangnan* (*Jiangnan Yeshe* [JNYS] 江南野史), which was published in Song (960-1126), are key records which provide abundant details on Southern Tang's relations with both the Five Dynasties and Khitan Liao. *Records of the Nine Kingdoms* (*Jiuguo zhi* 九國志, by Lu Zhen 路振 compiled during the early eleventh century)⁶⁰ and *Spring and Autumn of the Ten Kingdoms* (*Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋, by Wu Renchen 吳任臣 in the seventeenth century) provide supplemental information on the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and the surrounding Ten Kingdoms.

Material Sources

Excavated materials are crucial in my examination of identity and diplomacy in the ninth and tenth centuries, and help moderate the bias in the written histories. Especially, epitaphs prove to be crucial as they provide abundant biographical information of the deceased including origin, background, familial relations, and most importantly, their own perception of their identity.⁶¹ Considering that the epitaphs were written by people closest to the deceased, including family

⁶⁰ The nine kingdoms refer to Wu 吳, Southern Tang 南唐, Wuyue 吳越, Former Shu 前蜀, Later Shu 後蜀, Northern Han 北漢, Southern Han 南漢, Min 閩, Chu 楚, excluding Jingnan 荆南.

⁶¹ About general information about epitaphs, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Ping Yao, and Cong Ellen Zhang, *Chinese Funerary Biographies: An Anthology of Remembered Lives* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 3-22.

members and friends (although sometimes writers were hired by their families), epitaphs often directly or indirectly reflect the deceased's perspective. In addition, epitaphs provide valuable information about people who are not well-documented in the historical records.⁶² Another source I use in my dissertation is a document excavated comes from the Mogao caves in Dunhuang, one of the main Silk Road cities. In this cave, tens of thousands of documents were sealed up in the early eleventh century and rediscovered in 1900. Many records of communication between states and individuals not mentioned in the official histories were perfectly preserved in this cave. Among those records is a letter written from Later Jin Emperor Gaozu to Khitan Emperor Taizong, which becomes crucial in my evaluation of the relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao. Also, I use portraits of the emperors in comparison to textual sources. While portraits of emperors are often representations of ideal images of rulers, they reveal ideal and factual discrepancies within textual sources.

Chapter Synopsis

The dissertation is organized into two parts which thematically unpack the history of the Shatuo Turks. The first part, consisting of two chapters, delves into the origins and identities of the Shatuo Turks, while the second part, consisting of three chapters, explores their states and the political order of the time. This history of the Shatuo Turks contributes to a new understanding of the world from Inner Asia to the Korea peninsula between the periods of Tang and Song.

Part I, "Rise to the Throne: Origins and Identities of the Shatuo Turks," discusses the origins, ethnicity, and identities of the Shatuo Turks, while simultaneously probing their path to

⁶² This is often the case when dealing with females who generally did not appear in the official histories.

the throne. Chapter 1, “Becoming Royalty: The Dawn of the Shatuo Turks,” explores the origins of the Shatuo Turks and their rise during the Tang dynasty. Starting with criticism of and comments on the Shatuo’s origin in traditional dynastic histories, I trace their presumed ancestors throughout various sources. I then question what it meant to be Shatuo during the time by exploring the extent and boundaries of Shatuo identity. Epitaphs become crucial in this journey through their origin story as they reflect the Shatuo’s perspectives on their own identity. In this search, a clearer picture develops on how the Shatuo Turks expanded their influence and how their identity served to legitimate their rule as successors after the fall of Tang. I find that much of the Shatuo identity revolves around one family, the family of Li Keyong, and even more so after the Shatuo-Li family’s receipt of the imperial surname. I end by arguing that the Shatuo appellation seems very much bound to Tang institution and territory of the Shatuo Prefecture, and becomes inconsequential to the Shatuo rulers after the establishment of their own states.

Chapter 2, “Upon the Creation of the Identity of the Shatuo Turks,” traces the Shatuo Turks in their creation of their own unique “elite” identity. The first part of this chapter deals with the characteristics of the Shatuo Turkic people as seen by their Han counterparts. Rather than simply describing the ethnic traits of the Shatuo Turks, I utilize methodological approaches in medieval European studies regarding “strategies of distinction” to focus on the discourse and application of these distinctions during the tenth century. I argue that distinction based on the categories of language, physiognomy, culture, and occupation was not an objective or accurate criterion in which to distinguish the Shatuo Turks. In the second part of this chapter, I examine how “elite” Shatuo Turks constructed their identity. Through the analysis of succession events within the elite Shatuo group, I argue that the elite Shatuo group inadvertently created their own distinct identity of “merit over blood” through their unique usage of adoption and succession. I

delineate historical instances of adoption into three different forms—bloodline succession adoption, mass adoption, and targeted adoption. Through their use of targeted adoption unlike the adoptions conducted in the previous dynasties, the Shatuo Li family secured their reputation as a military powerhouse and cemented their legacy as charismatic rulers over the Middle Kingdom for over fifty years.

While Part I probes the origins and identities of the Shatuo Turks, Part II, “The Game of Thrones: The Shatuo Turkic States and A New Sino-Inner Asian Order,” turns to the rule of the Five Dynasties, giving special attention to the Shatuo Turkic dynasties, and elucidates the political order of the time by comparing received records and excavated materials of diplomatic exchanges. Chapter 3, “A Brotherhood Sharing ‘All Under Heaven’ (*tianxia*): The Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and the Khitans,” explores the intricate relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao by comparing the tributary rhetoric in records documented by both parties and analyzing their exchange of delegations. To accurately reflect the relations between the two states, I delve into the specifics of diplomatic rhetoric of the time and also take an unconventional approach to the timeworn methodology of the “tributary system” by adding some special characteristics. I argue that although relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao were in constant flux, Liao enjoyed diplomatic parity with the Shatuo Turkic court. The brotherly relationship established between the Later Tang and Liao founders paved the way for a relationship between equals sharing all-under-heaven (*tianxia* 天下). Scholars used to assume the Covenant of Chanyuan (1005), the treaty signed between the Song and the Liao, was the first time in East Asian history in which “two sons of heavens” shared the same world. My examination in this chapter shows that a century prior to the covenant, such framework had already been operating between the Liao and the Five Dynasties.

Chapter 4, “When the “Middle Kingdom” Diminished: The Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms,” examines the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties, and the Ten Kingdoms and the Korean Kingdoms. I start by studying the idea of “Zhongguo” or “Middle Kingdom” from the early medieval period to the tenth century. The “Zhongguo” of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period referred to territory and ethnicity, and later evolved to take on the conceptual meanings of peoples and states during Tang. By the time of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, “Zhongguo” expanded in breadth, evolving into a multi-conceptual word. I then explore how the Shatuo Turkic rulers shrewdly enforced practical diplomatic policy by installing leaders of certain surrounding states, including some of the Ten Kingdoms and “Four Barbarians,” and exhibited a charismatic show of force to reinforce their own legitimation and pursue the unification of the Middle Kingdom. Finally, I conclude by underscoring the logical paradox of the traditional period designation, the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period.

While Chapter 3 and 4 discusses the specifics of the diplomatic relations the Five Dynasties maintained with states from Inner Asia to the Korean peninsula, Chapter 5, “The New Three Kingdoms: Reframing the Legacy of Tang,” takes a step back to look at the fundamentals of this period, and in the process, reframes the post-Tang world. What impact did the Shatuo Turks have from a global perspective? Employing the definition of the “Middle Kingdom” deliberated on in the previous chapter, Chapter 5 examines three players and key events that define the macro-*realpolitik* of this period: Liao’s conquest of North China, Southern Tang’s reclamation of the Middle Kingdom, and Northern Han as an important player in the fight for hegemony over the Middle Kingdom. I conclude by challenging the period designation, the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.” As contended in the previous chapter, this period

designation, first conceptualized during the Song dynasty by the compiler Ouyang Xiu, fails to hold under sound logical argument. By using the three criteria of “self-recognition,” “unification desire,” and “relationships,” I test the significance of the states that existed in the period of time between Tang and Song, and suggest the periodization the “New Three Kingdoms” which more accurately represents the Sino-Inner Asian order over a connected world from Inner Asia to the Korean peninsula.

Part I | Rise to the Throne: Origins and Identities of the Shatuo Turks

Chapter 1. Becoming Royalty: The Dawn of the Shatuo Turks

Introduction: Barbarian or Noble?

“Shatuo” refers to the “grand desert” located in the south of the Jinsha mountain and the east of Pulei Sea. Ever since Chuyue have resided in this desert, [they were] called “the Shatuo Tujue (Turks).” [Because] the “barbarians” (*yidi*) did not have a written language to document the records, as Zhuxie also were too minor to have a record, their posterity lost their own lineage. It was said, at the time of Jinzhong’s grandson was bestowed the [imperial] surname Li; as the Li family became prominent, “barbarian” (*yidi*) people eventually considered the Shatuo as noble stock.⁶³

蓋沙陀者，大磧也，在金莎山之陽，蒲類海之東，自處月以來居此磧，號沙陀突厥，而夷狄無文字傳記，朱邪又微不足道，故其後世自失其傳。至盡忠孫始賜姓李氏，李氏後大，而夷狄之人遂以沙陀為貴種云。

An eleventh century Song historian, Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), craftily inserted his comments on the barbarian origins of the Shatuo Turks towards the end of the first Shatuo emperor’s annal in his *New History of Five Dynasties* (*XWDS*). According to him, the Shatuo Turks were mere “barbarians” (*yidi*) during the Tang dynasty and were confirmed as “noble stock” (*guizhong* 貴種) by “barbarians” only after they received the Tang imperial surname, Li 李.

As the Shatuo Turks became the rulers of one of the successor dynasties of Tang, their earlier records including their origins can be seen in both the dynastic histories, *Old History of Tang* (*JTS*) and *New History of Tang* (*XTS*). However, there is a stark contrast in how these two records treat the Shatuo Turks. *XTS* has a separate monograph of them under the categories of “Monographs of the Foreign States” 外國傳, apparently considering the Shatuo people as aliens, while in *JTS*, the records pertaining to the Shatuo appear mostly in the annals and biographies.

⁶³ *XWDS* 4:40.

Considering that *JTS* was published under the censorship of the Later Jin court, which was the second Shatuo Turkic dynasty, naturally, records pertaining to themselves would not be relegated to a section concerned with the records of foreign states.⁶⁴ With even the histories treating the Shatuo Turks in such vastly contrasting fashion, the Shatuo Turks become quite the enigmatic group of people. Who were the Shatuo Turks and where did they come from? Were the Shatuo Turks considered as “barbarians” during or after the Tang dynasty? And if so, where did this perception of their being “barbarian” come from, and do the Shatuo Turks warrant such a label? And most importantly, how did the Shatuo Turks become “noble stock” (*guizhong*)?

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I explore the origins of the Shatuo Turks and their rise during the Tang dynasty. By analyzing different descriptions of their origins, a clearer picture develops on how the Shatuo Turks expanded their influence during the second half of the Tang dynasty and paved the road towards their legitimation as successors. I start with Ouyang Xiu’s criticism of and comments on the Shatuo’s origin and retrospectively trace their presumed ancestors in other sources. Crucial in this journey through their origin story is the Shatuo’s own perspective. In addition to the official history records, I consider an epitaph of the Shatuo ruler, Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908), excavated in 1989,⁶⁵ which recounts the Shatuo Turkic narrative of their own origin and identity.

⁶⁴ The compilation process started from Later Tang in 924 and was presented in 945, under the succeeding Later Jin court. In terms of the details of compilation process of *JTS*, see Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 189-249.

⁶⁵ The epitaph, which is drafted by Lu Rubi 盧汝弼 and written by Wang Daoyuan 王道源 in clerical script style, was buried in 909 a year after the death of Li Keyong and excavated in Dai County 代縣 of Shanxi Province 山西省 in 1989. See Zhou Agen 周阿根, *Wudai muzhi huikao* 五代墓誌彙考 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2012), 1-4. Also see Moribe Yutaka 森部豊 and Iwami Kiyohiro 石見清裕, “Tōmatsu Sada ‘Ri Kokuyō boshi’ yakuchū, kōsatsu” 唐末沙陀“李克用墓誌”訳注, 考察, *Nairiku Ajia gengo no kenkyū* 内陸アジア言語の研究 18 (2003): 17-52.

Some of this work on the representation of the Shatuo origins has recently been dealt with by Maddalena Barengi. By comparing and contrasting different sources pertaining to the origins of the Shatuo, she argues that their migration narrative from Beiting 北庭 to Hedong 河東 in the mid-late eighth century was focused on making them “subjugated barbarians.”⁶⁶ Building on her work on the different representations of their origins, I focus more on the connections between the Shatuo-Li family and Xueyantuo 薛延陀, who were the one of the major nomadic groups in the first half of the seventh century. I also probe earlier mentions of the Shatuo which are primarily concerned with the intermarriages they had with other Turkic groups. These intermarriages helped the Shatuo maintain a network of connections with influential neighboring Turkic groups which supplemented their rise in the late seventh and eighth centuries.

In the second part of the chapter, I explore the Shatuo Turks as a people and as an assemblage of different groups of peoples. The Shatuo Turks became a magnet for other Turkic groups and practiced a flexible approach on the acceptance of these groups into their ranks in the ninth century. Particularly, by examining how the Shatuo-Li family’s receipt of the imperial surname differed from the other cases of receiving surnames in Tang, I argue that these distinctions, in fact, played a crucial role in empowering the family to become the true successors of Tang. I end by framing the Shatuo-Li family within the context of the broad Shatuo group by borrowing an aspect of the concept of *Traditionskern* or “kernel of tradition,” which was conceived and popularized by Reinhard Wenskus. In his book, *Stammesbildung und*

⁶⁶ Maddalena Barengi explored the origins of the Shatuo Turks in her paper exploring three different sources including Li Keyong’s epitaph, his annal in *JWDS*, and the Monograph of Shatuo (“Shatuo Memoir”) in *XTS*. See Barengi “Representations of Descent: Origin and Migration Stories of the Ninth- and Tenth-century Turkic Shatuo,” 53-86. I agree with her analysis on the discrete representations of the Shatuo Turks in each source.

Verfassung, Wenkus argued that the Germanic peoples were not homogeneous by kinship, but rather was an alliance of various groups bound together by identity upon being led by a small elite nucleus group, which often acted as a stimulus for the formation of tribal polities.⁶⁷ In the application of the concept of “kernel” to the Shatuo-Li family, I do not argue that Shatuo-Li family preserved all the “traditions” of the Turks. Here I use an adapted concept of Wolfram’s idea of “kernel.” After receiving the Tang imperial surname Li, the Shatuo-Li family became the center of the other Shatuo groups. This situating of the Shatuo-Li family as the *kernel* group for the entire Shatuo group serves as a prelude to the “elite” identity which I cover in Chapter 2.

And finally, in the third part of my chapter, I explore the extent and boundaries of the Shatuo identity, especially with regards to its ties to territory and political institution. Through the examination of the epitaphs of the main Shatuo descendants, I prove that starting from the rule of the Shatuo Turks during the Five Dynasties period, these Shatuo descendants do not particularly self-identify themselves as Shatuo. Rather, they self-identify as being part of the imperial family of Tang, especially considering their having received the imperial surname. This phenomenon suggests that the appellation Shatuo seems very much bound to Tang institution and territory of the Shatuo Prefecture and becomes inconsequential to the Shatuo rulers after the founding of their own states.

Who Were the Ancestors?

After the section on Emperor Zhuangzong’s (r. 923-926) legacy of achievements in his *XWDS*, Ouyang Xiu comments on the origins of the Shatuo Turks as follows:

⁶⁷ Reinhard Wenkus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes*.

We lament. For generations there frequently have been losses of records so how could it just be the fault of historians? Likely, the ancestors of the Li family originated from the Western Tujue (Turks) and their designation was Zhuxie. In later generations they designated themselves as Shatuo and made Zhuxie their surname while making Bayegu their progenitor. In the preface [of *JWDS*], it is said, “Shatuo” refers to the desert of Beiting. In the time of Emperor Taizong of Tang, after defeating the Western Tujue, [Taizong] separated the people of Tongluo and Pugu and placed them in this “desert” and established the Shatuo Prefecture, making their progenitor Bayegu as provincial military governor and bequeathing the position to his descendants. As several generations of serving as provincial military governor of the Shatuo [Prefecture], their descendants began calling themselves as “Shatuo.”

嗚呼，世久而失其傳者多矣，豈獨史官之繆哉！李氏之先，蓋出於西突厥，本號朱邪，至其後世，別自號曰沙陀，而以朱邪為姓，拔野古為始祖。其自序云：沙陀者，北庭之磧也。當唐太宗時，破西突厥諸部，分同羅、僕骨之人於此磧，置沙陀府，而以其始祖拔野古為都督，其傳子孫，數世皆為沙陀都督，故其後世因自號沙陀。

However, after inspecting extant records, I found their accounts all not true. Barbarians (*yidi*) do not have surnames, so “Zhuxie” just refers to the designation of a tribe. Bayegu and Zhuxie were contemporary peoples, [making Bayegu] not the progenitor [of the people surnamed Zhuxie]. So there was no Shatuo Prefecture during the reign of Emperor Taizong. After Emperor Taizong of Tang defeated the Western Turks, he divided their several tribes and installed the thirteen prefectures, turning Tonglou into Guilin Area Command, Pugu into Jinwei Area Command, Bayegu into Youling Area Command, but there was no Shatuo Area Command. At the time, Tiele belonged to the Western Turks [while] Yantuo and Ashina were the biggest subgroups; the other tribes including Tongluo, Pugu, Bayegu in all more than ten were the smaller ones. Also, there are even smaller tribes such as Chuyue and Chumi. Zhuxie [only] refers to a designation of auxiliary tribe of Chuyue. In the twenty second year of Emperor Taizong (648) Bayegu already have been submitted and the next year (649) Ashina Helu rebelled. In the second year of Yonghui (651) era during Emperor Gaozong’s reign, Zhuxie Guzhu followed [Ashina] Helu into the battle at Mountain Lao, but was defeated by Qibi Heli, eventually no one saw him afterwards. Around hundred fifty or sixty years later, during the [reign] of Emperor Xianzong (r. 805-820), Zhuxie Jinzhong and [his] son Zhiyi are seen in the Middle Kingdom, designated as Shatuo and making Zhuxie as [their] surname.⁶⁸

然予考于傳記，其說皆非也。夷狄無姓氏，朱邪，部族之號耳，拔野古與朱邪同時人，非其始祖，而唐太宗時，未嘗有沙陀府也。唐太宗破西突厥，分其諸部，置十三州，以同羅為龜林都督府，僕骨為金微都督府，拔野古為幽陵都督府，未嘗有沙陀府也。當是時，西突厥有鐵勒，延陀、阿史那之類為最大；其別部有同羅、僕

⁶⁸ Translation from Richard Davis’s *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 38-39. *XWDS* 4:39-40; Also, see Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” 602.

骨、拔野古等以十數，蓋其小者也；又有處月、處密諸部，又其小者也。朱邪者，處月別部之號耳。太宗二十二年，已降拔野古，其明年，阿史那賀魯叛。至高宗永徽二年，處月朱邪孤注從賀魯戰于牢山，為契苾何力所敗，遂沒不見。後百五十六年，憲宗時，有朱邪盡忠及子執宜見於中國，而自號沙陀，以朱邪為姓矣。

In this comment, Ouyang Xiu introduces the preface of “the Annal of Zhuangzong” in the *Old History of Five Dynasties (JWDS)* and refutes it.⁶⁹ *JWDS*’s records on the Shatuo during the early Tang can be summarized into three key parts. First, the group initially used “Zhuxie” as their surname and “Shatuo” was the designation for the Area Command. Second, after Emperor Taizong (r. 626-649) defeated the Western Turks, he established the Shatuo Prefecture and placed the Tongluo 同羅 and Pugu 僕骨 people in this prefecture. According to these records, *JWDS* compilers recognized that a “Shatuo Prefecture” existed during Taizong’s reign in the first half of the seventh century.⁷⁰ Third, *JWDS* states that the progenitor of the Shatuo was Bayegu 拔野古.

In the following passage, Ouyang Xiu lays out his argument against *JWDS*’s records. From Ouyang Xiu’s perspective, “barbarians” (*yidi*) originally do not have surnames. For this reason, “Zhuxie” was not their surname from the beginning but would only have been used starting from early ninth century.⁷¹ He also persists in his denial of a “Shatuo Prefecture” during the reign of Taizong, articulating this same line twice. He contends that because Bayegu and

⁶⁹ Davis supposed that “the preface” (*zixu* 自序) referred to that of *JWDS*. See Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 39. Atwood surmised that the preface came from the preface to the Veritable Records of Later Tang. See Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” 601. Barengi argued that the preface could be from either the Veritable Records of Zhuangzong or the three commemorative *jinian lu*. See Barengi, “Representations of Descent,” 65. Even though the wording is slightly differently, the content is similar to that of *JWDS*. Here, I follow Davis’s interpretation.

⁷⁰ *JWDS* 27:331.

⁷¹ See Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China,” 599. For the details of the medieval surnames, see Xin Wen, “What’s in a Surname? Central Asian Participation in the Culture of Naming of Medieval China,” *T’ang Studies* 34 (2016): 73-98.

Zhuxie people were contemporaries, Bayegu cannot possibly be their progenitor, and therefore, this “Shatuo Prefecture” never existed during that time. Ouyang Xiu ends by saying that this group of people disappeared for approximately a span of a hundred sixty years and reappeared in the early ninth century during the reign of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805-820).

Then how are the Shatuo portrayed in *XTS*? Within *XTS*, which was officially compiled by a team under the supervision of Song Qi (998-1061) and Ouyang Xiu by order of Song Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063), a more detailed history on the origins of the Shatuo can be seen. This record of the Shatuo in *XTS* agrees with Ouyang Xiu’s perspective in *XWDS*, however, without explicitly mentioning the three elements that Ouyang Xiu refuted. *XTS* does not trace Bayegu as a predecessor of the Shatuo Turks, nor does it record the group as having initially been designated as Zhuxie. Further, the Shatuo Prefecture is mentioned in *XTS* within the records detailing the Huang Chao rebellion (875-884).⁷² Overall, *XTS*’s record of the Shatuo during the Tang period is divided into four parts. The first part chronicles how the Shatuo Turks settled down and participated in both small and great battles in the eighth century. The second part deals with Zhuxie Jinzhong’s 朱邪盡忠 submission to the Tibetans in great detail. The third part explores the rise of Li Keyong and the demise of the Tang empire. And lastly, the compilers append their comments on the Shatuo Turks.

Although *XTS* appears to be more particular in the categorization of the history of the Shatuo into distinct phases, taken as a whole, its portrayal of the Shatuo people is similar to that of *XWDS*. The Shatuo are depicted as a fringe group that were beneficiaries of the Tang court and occasionally participated in the oppression of other frontier people. Even the substantial portion of the monograph dedicated to recounting the rise of Li Keyong as a warlord and

⁷² *XTS* 218:6153-6166.

recognizing the Shatuo as a capable militant group for generations serves as a prelude for the ostensible main purpose of the monograph—to express their regrets about the Shatuo Turks. For even with all the military prowess of the Shatuo and the bravery of Li Keyong, the Shatuo were not able to save the Tang court from other militant groups.⁷³

On the other hand, Li Keyong's epitaph relates a completely different narrative from the official dynastic histories such as *XTS* and *XWDS* that trace the Shatuo people back to Chuyue 處月. His epitaph consists of three parts. The first part details his genealogy and ancestors. The second part lists his major achievements during his lifetime. And the last part mentions his familial relations including his wives and offspring. Here, I look at the first part of his epitaph pertaining to his genealogy.⁷⁴

The prince's taboo name was Keyong, and his courtesy name was Yiwang, from Chengji in Longxi. As [having been a status of] nine ministers, [his family] received surname and connected to the branches of the [Tang] imperial family. The fourth-generation ancestor, Yidu, was a lord of state of Xueyantuo and Immeasurable General. [His] great-grandfather, Sige, succeeded the state's inherited peerage title, and ruled over Yin mountains (Yinshan). [His] grandfather was Zhiyi, whom the emperor appointed as Yinshan Garrison Area Commander-in-chief and Commissioner of the Shatuo Three Armies and Assistant to the Imperial Counsellor. [His] eminent diseased father was Guochang, whom the emperor appointed Left Dragon Martial Commander-general; retired as Acting Minister of Education; eventually added posthumously Grand Guardian.

王諱克用，字翼望，隴西成紀人也。以象河命氏，與磐石聯枝，自四代祖益度，薛延陀國君、無限將軍。曾祖思葛，繼國襲爵，霸有陰山。祖執儀，皇任陰山府大都督，三軍沙陀都知兵馬使兼御史中丞。烈考國昌，皇任左龍武統軍、檢校司徒致休，□終追加太保。

⁷³ *XTS* 218:6153. "For this reason, [even though they] saw the emperor was under the threat of being deposed, they shrank their neck and shamefully perspired, and pathetically awaited the demise [of the Tang dynasty], is not this base?" 故熟視帝劫遷，縮頸羞汗，偷景待僵，不亦鄙乎！

⁷⁴ Zhou Agen, *Wudai muzhi huikao*, 1-4.

Because his father, Li Guochang (d. 887), received the Tang imperial surname, Li Keyong traces his origin to Chengji in Longxi 隴西.⁷⁵ In addition to his fourth-generation ancestor Yidu, three ancestors of Li Keyong were introduced in this epitaph: Sige, Zhiyi, and Li Guochang. Li Keyong's great-grandfather, Sige, however, is not seen in the other sources. It is likely that Sige is another name for Zhuxie Jinzhong, who appears as the father of Zhuxie Zhiyi 朱邪執儀 in *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ*.⁷⁶ Unlike the official histories, the epitaph does not include details about Li Keyong's great-grandfather's achievements.⁷⁷ It simply mentions that his great-grandfather "succeeded the state's inherited peerage title and ruled over the Yin mountains." Why is his great-grandfather simplified on his epitaph even though he had a crucial role in the migration process of the Shatuo in the late ninth century? Zhuxie Jinzhong, known as Li Keyong's great-grandfather in the official histories, once defected to the Tibetan empire. Ouyang Xiu mentions his defection both in the "Monograph of Shatuo" in *XTS* and "Annal of Zhuangzong" in *XWDS*.⁷⁸ Here is *XTS*'s version of the episode.

⁷⁵ The Tang imperial family is known to have come from Chengji in Longxi 隴西.

⁷⁶ *JWDS* 25:331; *XWDS* 4:31; *ZZTJ* 237:7651. *JWDS* specifically mentioned that Zhiyi was the first son of Jinzhong. *XTS* did not mention that Zhiyi was the son of Zhuxie Jinzhong but recorded that Zhiyi was his successor (*XTS* 218:6154-6155). Most likely the name "Jinzhong" 盡忠 which literally means "to render loyalty to the greatest extent," was conferred by the Tang court. There was another case in which a foreign general used this name: Li Jinzhong 李盡忠. Li Jinzhong was known as a Khitan chieftain whose grandfather, Li Kuge 李窟哥, submitted to the Tang court. (*JTS* 3:61; *JTS* 199b:5350; *XTS* 219:6168.) In terms of the names, Yidu and Sige, Barengi explained that using both non-Han names might denote that Shatuo used non-Han names in a social context. See Barengi, "Representations of Descent," 67.

⁷⁷ See Barengi, "Representations of Descent," 76-77.

⁷⁸ Ouyang Xiu elaborately deals with Zhuxie Jinzhong's defection in the very beginning of Zhuangzong's annal in *XWDS*. As follows: "At the time of the reign of Emperor Dezong (r. 779-805) of Tang, a person called Zhuxie Jinzhong resided at Jinman Prefecture of Beiting. During the Zhenyuan era (785-805), when Tibetan *tsempo* attack and conquered the Beiting region, [the *tsempo*] moved Jinzhong to Gan Prefecture to serve [the military] there. After the *tsempo* were defeated by the Uyghurs, Jinzhong and his son, Zhiyi, almost fled eastward. The *tsempo* became angry and chased them to Shimen Pass and Jinzhong died at the battle. [Eventually] Zhiyi alone fled to return to Tang and relocated to Yan Prefecture, submitting to Hexi Military Commander, Fan Xichao." 唐德宗時，有朱邪盡忠者，居於北庭之金滿州。貞元中，吐蕃贊普攻陷北庭，徙盡忠於甘州而役屬之。其後贊普為回鶻所敗，盡忠與其子執宜東走，贊普怒，追之，及于石門關，盡忠戰死，執宜獨走歸唐，居之鹽州，以隸河西節度使范

During the Zhenyuan era (785-805), seven thousand households of the Shatuo group defected to Tibet and they together invaded Beiting and took it. Tibet relocated the group in the Gan Prefecture and installed Jinzhong as a senior military chancellor (*blon chen*). Tibet invaded the frontier zones, often making the Shatuo the vanguard. After some time, when the Uyghurs invaded Liang Prefecture, Tibet was suspicious if Jinzhong had two thoughts, [so they] discussed about relocating the Shatuo beyond Yellow River, and this raised anxiety and fright in the group. Jinzhong and Zhuxie Zhiyi plotted and [Zhiyi] said, “For generations we were Tang subjects. Unfortunately, we fell in dirt. Now if we run to Xiao Pass and voluntarily return, is it not better than [our] stock being eradicated?” Jinzhong said, “alright.” During the third year of Yuanhe (808) era, all of the three thousands of tribal group followed a path of Wudejian Mountain and went to the east. As the Tibetans chased them, [the Shatuo sometimes] marched and had battles. Arriving at the shore of Tao River and heading towards to Shimen Pass, the battles were restless and the soldiers almost all died out. Jinzhong [also] died there. Zhiyi collected the injured: two thousands of soldiers; seven hundreds of cavalries; thousands of various livestock and camels. After they arrived at frontier of Ling Prefecture, the military commander, Fan Xichao reported it to the court. [Emperor Xianzong (r.805-820)] placed the tribal group in Yan Prefecture, organized them into Yin Mountain Area Command, and installed Zhiyi as Garrison Commander.⁷⁹

貞元中，沙陀部七千帳附吐蕃，與共寇北庭，陷之。吐蕃徙其部甘州，以盡忠為軍大論。吐蕃寇邊，常以沙陀為前鋒。久之，回鶻取涼州，吐蕃疑盡忠持兩端，議徙沙陀于河外，舉部愁恐。盡忠與朱邪執宜謀，曰：「我世為唐臣，不幸陷汙，今若走蕭關自歸，不愈於絕種乎？」盡忠曰：「善。」元和三年，悉眾三萬落循烏德鞬山而東，吐蕃追之，行且戰，旁洮水，奏石門，轉鬪不解，部眾略盡，盡忠死之。執宜哀癡傷，士裁二千，騎七百，雜畜橐它千計，款靈州塞，節度使范希朝以聞。詔處其部鹽州，置陰山府，以執宜為府兵馬使。

Under the supervision of Zhuxie Jinzhong, seven thousand Shatuo households became a part of the Tibetan empire and Jinzhong himself received a high rank military office from the Tibetan ruler. In return, his military was utilized, primarily, as the vanguard in battles against the Tang court. With Tibet expressing their apprehensions about the loyalty of the Shatuo, Zhuxie Jinzhong's son and successor, Zhuxie Zhiyi, persuaded his father to return to the Tang court. During their return to Tang, unfortunately, Zhuxie Jinzhong met his death with only Zhuxie

希朝。(XWDS 4:31) Sima Guang's also recorded Jinzhong's and Zhiyi's defection to the Tibetan empire. (ZZTJ 233:7521).

⁷⁹ XTS 218:6154.

Zhiyi arriving in the Tang jurisdiction. The record clearly shows that it was Zhuxie Zhiyi who led the Yin Mountain garrison.

From the perspective of Li Keyong and his family, the events pertaining to the fluctuation of loyalties between the two states and resubmitting to the Tang court must have been embarrassing episodes of their history that they wanted to dismiss. This could explain the omission of such events in the epitaph. Accordingly, Zhuxie Jinzhong's name was substituted with the pseudonym Sige.⁸⁰ Likewise, Zhuxie Jinzhong does not appear in *JTS*.⁸¹ Considering that *JTS* was compiled under the supervision of the Shatuo-Later Tang and Jin dynasties, it is likely that his record was deliberately omitted. The Shatuo's submission to Tibet only sees a fleeting mention in the "Monograph of Tibet" in *JTS*. The record briefly states that the Shatuo were forced to surrender after suffering invasions from both Tibet and the Uyghurs.⁸² No specific leader of the group is named on this occasion. Additionally, when Li Keyong's son, Li Cunxu 李存勖 (r. 923-926), known as Zhuangzong, became the first emperor of Later Tang, he installed his direct ancestors as posthumous emperors and left out his great-great-grandfather, Zhuxie Jinzhong. He only retroactively installed posthumous emperors for up to three generations including his great-grandfather, Zhiyi; his grandfather, Li Guochang; and his father, Li Keyong.⁸³ This case is unusual when considering Li Keyong's contemporary, Zhu Wen 朱溫 (r.

⁸⁰ It is also possible that Zhuxie Jinzhong was not the biological father of Zhuxie Zhiyi, but the foster father considering that the Shatuo Turks adopted sons and these adopted sons were allowed to succeed. However, even if considering that Zhuxie Jinzhong was not the biological father of Zhiyi, it is evident that Zhiyi indeed succeeded Jinzhong in the official sources. See *JWDS* 25:331; *XWDS* 4:31; *ZZTJ* 237:7651; *XTS* 218:6154-6155.

⁸¹ Only Li Keyong's grandfather, Zhiyi, is mentioned in *JTS*. (*JTS* 16:499-500 and 165:4304)

⁸² *JTS* mentions "As people in Beiting have been already suffered from the Uyghurs, this year the whole city submitted to Tibet, [and] the Shatuo tribal group also submitted."

北庭之人既苦迴紇，是歲乃舉城降於吐蕃，沙陀部落亦降焉。(*JTS* 196b:5257)

⁸³ *JWDS* 25:332; *XWDS* 5:45; *WDHY* 1:10-2. Li Cunxu could have installed more posthumous emperors inasmuch as his father, Li Keyong, was the practical founder of the Shatuo dynasty.

907-912), the first emperor of Later Liang, who installed four generations of his paternal ancestors as posthumous emperors.⁸⁴ Also, the founders of Later Jin, Later Han, and Later Zhou respectively installed their four generations of ancestors as posthumous emperors.⁸⁵ It is remarkable that among the imperial families of the Five Dynasties, only the Later Tang imperial family installed three generations rather than four. In light of Li Keyong's epitaph being written under the supervision of Li Cunxu, the omission of Jinzhong from the epitaph seems to be deliberate. There was most likely consensus amongst Li Cunxu and the Later Tang court about the humiliating nature of this past.

Interestingly, there was a record of Zhuxie Jinzhong in his son's, Zhuxie Zhiyi's, chronicle. According to *WDHY*, during the reign of Mingzong 明宗 (r. 926-933), the newly revised chronicles of the three ancestors of Zhuangzong—Zhuxie Zhiyi, Li Guochang, and Li Keyong—were presented to the emperor. Even though the chronicles were subsequently lost, some portions were left as a form of commentary in *ZZTJ*. The chronicle included Zhiyi's heroic episode on his decision to return to the Tang court and his role as a medium between the Tibet and Uyghurs.⁸⁶ Barengi emphasizes that this chronicle became a basis of *XTS*.⁸⁷ Surprisingly, even though the chronicles were presented to Mingzong, eventually the record of Zhiyi and Jinzhong's defection to the Tang court was not included in *JTS*, which can be seen as an intentional choice of the Later Tang court.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *WDHY* 1:10-1.

⁸⁵ *WDHY* 1:11-12.

⁸⁶ *WDHY* 18:6-2; *ZZTJ* 237:7651-7652.

⁸⁷ For the detailed discussions on the Zhuxie Zhiyi's chronicle and its translations, See Barengi, "Representations of Descent," 77-81.

⁸⁸ *JTS* was finally compiled by the Later Jin court, but the compilation process started from the Later Tang court. Most likely, the Later Jin court preserved the materials gathered by the Later Tang court such as the chronicles. See Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, 189-249.

Contrary to the omission of Zhuxie Jinzhong's record, Zhiyi's installment as the Garrison Commander appears in the epitaph, which corresponds with the records in *XTS*. Since Zhuxie Zhiyi made remarkable contributions to the Tang court with his suppression of rebellions, the spotlight on Zhuxie Zhiyi was justifiable and merited recognition both on the epitaph and in the official histories. In addition, Li Keyong's epitaph does not mention anything about their previous surnames such as Zhuxie or Shatuo.

In summary, *XTS*, *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* detail the ancestry of the Shatuo Turks while *JTS* does not. Amongst the former sources, *JWDS* states that the Shatuo originated from Bayegu, while *XTS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* record the Shatuo as having originated from Chuyue. However, Li Keyong's epitaph records neither Bayegu nor Chuyue as his progenitor and instead claims Yidu, a fourth-generation lord of Xueyantuo, as his ancestor. While these sources vary on the origins of the Shatuo, they generally agree with one another starting from the time of Zhuxie Zhiyi, Li Keyong's grandfather.

A Lord of Xueyantuo as Direct Ancestor

In *JWDS*, the supposed Shatuo progenitor, Bayegu, followed Taizong upon the conquest of Xueyantuo.⁸⁹ If Bayegu was the progenitor of the Shatuo Turks, it contradicts the description in the epitaph that Shatuo's ancestor was Xueyantuo. In fact, Li Keyong's epitaph never mentions Bayegu as their ancestors. Strikingly, unlike other official sources, in his epitaph, Li Keyong's genealogy is traced to Yidu, a lord of the Xueyantuo state. The epitaph's drawing of a connection between Shatuo and Xueyantuo is particularly meaningful not only because it differs from other

⁸⁹ *JWDS* 25:331; *CFYG* 1:15-2.

sources, but also because this connection is their self-professed origin story. Why did Li Keyong's epitaph record his fourth-generation ancestor as a lord of the Xueyantuo state and why does this record differ from the rest of the official histories?

First, who or what was Xueyantuo? Xueyantuo should be considered as both a people and a state. The earliest record of Xueyantuo appears in the *History of Northern Dynasties* (*Bei shi* 北史), describing Xueyantuo as one of the Tiele tribes.⁹⁰ Song historian Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1096) mentions in his *ZZTJ* that among the fifteen tribes of Tiele, Xueyantuo was the most powerful.⁹¹ Upon the conquest of the Turks, Xueyantuo was the only tribal group to establish a khanate comparable to the Turks. During the reign of Yi'nan 夷男, known as Zhenzhu Khan 真珠可汗 (d. 645), Xueyantuo recovered the former territory of Xiongnu. Due to their sudden expansion in the north, Emperor Taizong even promised to send a princess to marry Yi'nan. Although the actual marriage did not take place, it is remarkable that Taizong initially made the decision to send his fifteenth daughter, Princess Xinxing 新興公主, instead of a lesser regarded imperial daughter or adopted daughter.⁹²

⁹⁰ Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Bei shi* 北史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 99:3303. Also, in Wei Zheng 魏徵, *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 84:1879-1880.

⁹¹ *ZZTJ* 192:6044-6045. *XTS* mentions that "after Tujue was defeated, only Uyghurs and Xueyantuo were the strongest." 惟回紇與薛延陀為最雄彊。(*XTS* 217a:6112) Similar record is seen in *JTS* (*JTS* 145:5196). Also, as mentioned in *XWDS*, Yantuo and Ashina are the biggest subgroups. Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 38-39; *XWDS* 4:39-40.

⁹² Instead of sending an adopted daughter, sending a biological daughter reveals the Tang court's urgency to establish a cordial relationship with Xueyantuo. Taizong's concerns about the expansion of Xueyantuo appear in the conversation with his officials after having received their marriage request (*JTS* 199b:5345). A year prior to this arrangement, Emperor Taizong accepted an intermarriage request from a Tibetan ruler. In 641, Princess Wencheng 文成公主, an imperial daughter, was married to Tibetan *tsempo*, Songtsen Gampo (*ZZTJ* 195:6157; 196:6164; *JTS* 3:52; 196a:5221; *XTS* 216a:6074). Upon the cancellation of the *heqin* policy between Tang and Xueyantuo, Princess Xinxing was eventually married to Zhangsun Xi 長孫曦. See *XTS* 93:3647; Wang Pu 王溥, *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 21:413.

Indeed, there is a high possibility that Li Keyong's family truly had no connections with Xueyantuo, but instead, intentionally fabricated their genealogy to associate themselves with Xueyantuo. Connecting one's origin to a prior glorious group is quite a common phenomenon. One such example can be found when considering the Xianbei, who established Northern Wei (386-535). The first page of *History of Wei* writes that Xianbei were descendants of the Chinese mythical "Yellow Emperor." By skipping generations in the middle, Xianbei was connected to this mythical emperor.⁹³ Also, similar cases can be found in Europe. Take for example the Frankish people, known to be one of the "barbarians," who were known for their fictive connection to the Greek Trojans. This Trojan-Frankish connection was abruptly created in the seventh century during the Merovingian period.⁹⁴

There are four conceivable reasons why the Shatuo would connect their genealogy to Xueyantuo. First and most obviously, as mentioned before, Xueyantuo was the strongest tribal group amongst Tiele. Second, and connected to the first reason, Bayegu, the supposed progenitor of Shatuo according to *JWDS*, was not a prominent tribal group. Bayegu was one kind of Tiele and was juxtaposed with other smaller tribal groups in the official histories.⁹⁵ Mostly, they were portrayed as nothing more than a subsidiary group in the records. For instance, in 628 when Yi'nan of Xueyantuo defeated Tujue and established a state, Bayegu was just one of the several tribal groups subjugated under Yi'nan.⁹⁶ In 647, upon the fall of the Xueyantuo state, Bayegu defected to the Tang court and was placed in the Youling Area Command.⁹⁷ Li Keyong's family

⁹³ Wei Shou 魏收, *Wei shu* 魏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 1:1.

⁹⁴ The creation of the Trojan-Merovingian connection has been scrutinized by premodern and modern scholars. See George Huppert, "The Trojan Franks and their Critics," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 227-241.

⁹⁵ *Sui shu* 84:1879; *JTS* 199b:5343; *XTS* 217b:6139.

⁹⁶ At the time, Uyghurs, Bayegu, Adie, Tongluo, and Xi were subjugated under Xueyantuo. See *JTS* 199b:5344.

⁹⁷ *JTS* 199b:5348; *XTS* 217b:6140; *Tongdian* 199:5468.

must have understood the insignificant role of Bayegu and knowingly chose to substitute this group with Xueyantuo.

Third, Xueyantuo's history with the Tang court could have served as the connection they needed to make Xueyantuo their predecessors. Despite Xueyantuo's power being comparable to that of Tang at one point, they eventually collapsed and were annexed to the Tang court starting from the seventh century. Unlike the Uyghurs, another Tiele group which established and maintained a great Steppe empire in the north till the mid-ninth century, Xueyantuo's early incorporation into the Tang court must have made them an easy target for the Li family to install them as progenitor. When considering Li Keyong's three generations of direct ancestors including Sige (possibly Zhuxie Jinzhong), Zhuxie Zhiyi, and Li Guochang; this connection does not contradict with Li Keyong's position as a Tang subject and general for generations. The epitaph includes Li Keyong's significant military merits including his contribution to suppress the Huang Chao (d. 884) rebellion, and his installment as general, chancellor, and Prince of Jin 晉王 under the Tang court. Ever since Xueyantuo was subjugated under the Tang court around 646, Xueyantuo disappeared in the records, so adopting their dismissed lineage must have been quite opportune.⁹⁸

In addition to these three reasons, there is a correlation between Xueyantuo and the Western Turks. Xueyantuo once were a part of the Western Turks when Chuluo Qaghan 處羅可汗 of Tujue defeated Tiele⁹⁹ in 605. So naturally, Xueyantuo, as one of the Tiele groups, were incorporated into the Western Turks. Until Xueyantuo's leader, Yi'nan, defected to the

⁹⁸ Xueyantuo's last ruler, Duomozhi 咄摩支, known as Yitewushi Khan 伊特勿失可汗, defected to the Tang court and was installed as Right General of the Militant Guard 右武衛將軍 (*JTS* 199b:5438). There is no additional information about Xueyantuo after the fall of the state.

⁹⁹ *JTS* 195:5191.

Eastern Turks in 628, they were part of the Western Turks for more than twenty years. If Li Keyong was aware of Xueyantuo's connection to the Western Turks, Shatuo's connection with Xueyantuo could have served as the optimal option they could select from other alternatives, as Shatuo were known to have been a branch of the Western Turks.

Unlike the official history records, Li Keyong's epitaph directly connects their ancestors to the lord of the Xueyantuo state, Yidu. Even though this sole record cannot attest to Shatuo's direct connections with Xueyantuo, it is significant to know why they made a such connection. Shatuo's connection with Xueyantuo, who were the prominent rulers of Inner Asia in the seventh century, must have helped the Shatuo people to consolidate power amongst the Inner Asian tribes.

Earlier Mentions of Shatuo

Even though neither Li Keyong's epitaph nor *JTS* confirms the genealogy of Li Keyong beyond the fourth generation including Li Keyong himself, *XTS* alone traces their genealogy back to Zhuxie que sijin A'que 朱邪闕俟斤阿厥 of Chuyue.¹⁰⁰ Following him comes Zhuxie Guzhu 朱邪孤注 and Shatuo Nasu 沙陀那速 who coexisted during the early Yonghui 永徽 era (650-655) of Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649-683). This genealogy becomes quite important to gauge how the Shatuo-Zhuxie people maintained connections with other major Turkic groups starting from the seventh century. *XTS*'s records on the genealogy of the Shatuo Turks shows Zhuxie Guzhu's connection with the ruling family of the Western Turkic Khanate, Ashina 阿史那. The connections between the Ashina and Zhuxie-Shatuo tribes appear starting from when Ashina

¹⁰⁰ *XTS* 218:6153.

Helu 阿史那賀魯, known as Shabolüe Qaghan 沙鉢略可汗 (r. 651-657) and the last qaghan of the Western Turkic Khaganate, rebelled against the Tang court. At the time, Zhuxie Guzhu joined Ashina Helu's military.¹⁰¹ Even though the Western Turkic Khanate disappeared after Ashina Helu, there are two major connections between the Zhuxie/Shatuo people and other Turkic tribes through intermarriages.¹⁰²

The first instance of intermarriage is with the Shunishi 鼠尼施 tribe, one of the Western Turkic tribes. *XTS* records Shatuo Jinshan 沙陀金山 as an important figure during mid-seventh century as he contributed to the suppression of a group of Tiele,¹⁰³ but the connection between Zhuxie Guzhu or Shatuo Nasu, and Shatuo Jinshan is unclear. Shatuo Jinshan was married to a woman from the Shunishi tribe, one of the ten tribes that were subjugated under Ashina Helu upon his rebellion against the Tang court.¹⁰⁴ The second case of intermarriage is between the Shatuo-Zhuxie and Ashina groups. The epitaph of Lady Ashina was excavated in Xi'an. Even though the epitaph did not include Lady Ashina's husband's given name, it is possible to identify her husband as presumably [Shatuo] Fuguo 輔國, Shatuo Jinshan's son and successor.¹⁰⁵ Mao Hanguang's 毛漢光 states that the "Shatuo lord" is most likely Fuguo when considering the two facts that Fuguo was installed as provincial military governor (*dudu* 都督) in 714 and the epitaph was made in 720.¹⁰⁶ Here is the first part of her epitaph elucidating her identity.

¹⁰¹ *XTS* 215b:6061 and 218:6154.

¹⁰² Barengi also explored the marriages between Shatuo and other Turkic tribes. See, Barengi, "Representations of Descent," 73-74.

¹⁰³ *XTS* 218:6154.

¹⁰⁴ Barengi, "Representations of Descent: Origin and Migration Stories of the Ninth- and Tenth-century Turkic Shatuo," 73.

¹⁰⁵ Fuguo as the successor of Shatuo Jinshan appears in *XTS* 218:6154.

¹⁰⁶ See Mao Hanguang 毛漢光, *Tangdai muzhiming huibian fukao* 唐代墓誌銘彙編附考 (Taipei: Jingxiao chu Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), 129-130. The image of epitaph is from the same book on page 133. Fan Wenli also argues that the husband of Lady Ashina is Fuguo. He mentions that Shatuo Jinshan, Fuguo's father, was in his seventies in 714, so it would have been impossible to marry a 17-year-

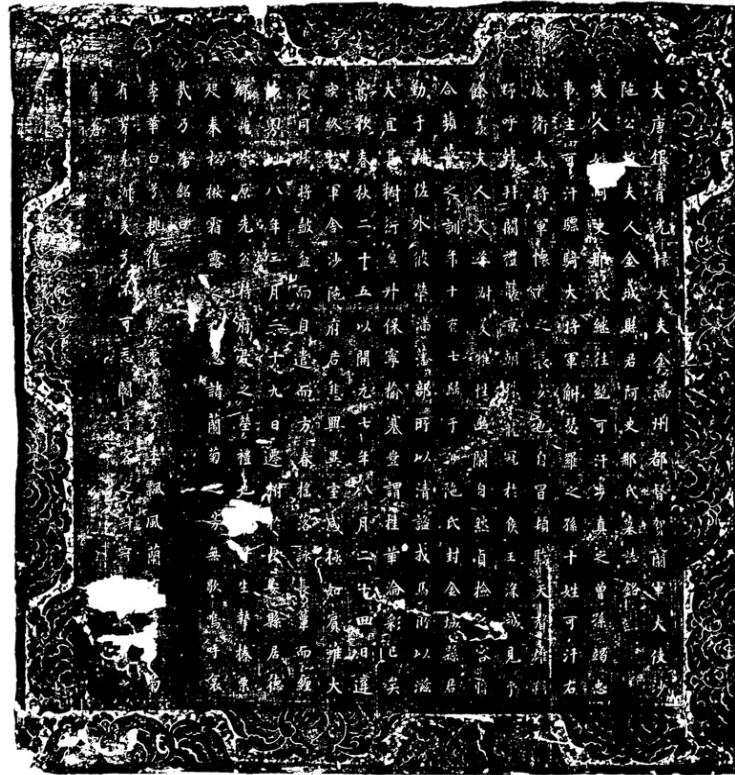


Figure 1.1: Epitaph of Lady Ashina

The lady's surname was Ashina, great-granddaughter of Jiwangjue Qaghan (lit. Qaghan continued what was severed), [Ashina] Buzhen, granddaughter of Jiezhong Shizhu Qaghan (lit. qaghan who devoted loyalty to serve ruler) Great General of Fast Cavalry [Ashina] Huseluo, the eldest daughter of Shixing Qaghan (lit. qaghan of the ten surnames) Right Militant Guard General [Ashina] Huaidao... The lady's heavenly endowed manner was chaste and beautiful, and [her] elegant nature was demure and retiring, with a demeanor that was naturally pure and restrained, which corresponded with ritual instructions. When seventeen, [she was] married to Shatuo clan, and installed as Jincheng County Mistress...

夫人姓阿史那氏，繼往絕可汗步真之曾孫，竭忠事主可汗驃騎大將軍斛瑟羅之孫，十姓可汗右威衛大將軍懷道之長女也。… 夫人天姿淑美，雅性幽閑，自然貞檢之容，暗合蘋蘩之訓。年十有七，歸于沙陀氏，封金城縣君…

old woman from a prestigious family. (Fan Wenli, *Li Keyong pingzhuan*, 9). Following the epitaph, I mention Fuguo as “Shatuo” Fuguo.

Lady Ashina was a direct descendant of the ruling tribe of the ruined Western Turkic Khanate. After Ashina Helu was defeated by the Tang court, the independent Western Turkic Khanate officially became defunct. However, the Tang court bestowed qaghan titles to a few core members of the Ashina tribe. Ashina Buzhen (d. 666) was one of these select few. As his title name Jiwangjue Qaghan 繼往絕可汗 (lit. “qaghan continued what was severed”) implies, Ashina Buzhen was the first generation of Western Turkic rulers under the Tang court. His son, Ashina Huseluo (d. 704), was also installed as a qaghan by Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-795) in 690.¹⁰⁷ Following him, Ashina Huseluo’s son Ashina Huaidao (d. 708) was installed as a qaghan by Wu Zetian in 704.¹⁰⁸ Even though the titles were nominal, the Ashina tribe still had significant power. Lady Ashina’s sister was married to Sulu 蘇祿 of Tuqushi (Türgesh) upon receiving a princess title from the Tang court.¹⁰⁹ Her brother Ashina Xin 阿史那昕 was installed as Shixing Qaghan 十姓可汗 (lit. “qaghan of the ten surnames”) by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713-756) in 740.¹¹⁰ Ashina Xin’s wife, Lady Li, also received a princess title from the Tang court.¹¹¹ While Ashina Xin’s wife could have been installed as princess either because she came from the Tang imperial family or because of her status of being Ashina Xin’s wife, both reasons demonstrate that the Tang court considered the core Ashina group crucial for stable rule. Considering Lady Ashina’s status amongst the Western Turks, it might be possible that her

¹⁰⁷ *XTS* 215b:6065.

¹⁰⁸ *ZZTJ* 207:6569.

¹⁰⁹ *JTS* 194b:5191, 166:5085; *XTS* 215b:6067; Du You 杜佑, *Tong dian* 通典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 199:5463; *ZZTJ* 212:6754; Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol Neighbors: Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 217. According to *ZZTJ*, in 722, Ashina Huaidao’s daughter was installed as Princess Jiaohe 交河公主 and was married to Sulu, a Tuqushi Khagan. Jonathan Skaff stated that this relation was “a fascinating ménage à trois” among Tuqushi, Western Turk, and Tang. Unlike *ZZTJ* and *XTS*, both *JTS* and *Tong dian* record the Ashina Huaidao’s daughter as having been installed as Princess Jinhe 金河公主.

¹¹⁰ *ZZTJ* 214:6841.

¹¹¹ *XTS* 215b:6066.

marriage was arranged by the Tang court. She was installed as Jincheng County Mistress 金城縣君 after marrying Shatuo Puguo. Thanks to this wedlock, Shatuo Fuguo might have been able to make connections with not only the Ashina tribe but also with Tuqushi and the Tang court.

This epitaph not only delineates the deceased's prominent genealogy but also sheds light on how the name, "Shatuo," was used in the seventh and eighth centuries. It confirms that "Shatuo" was used as a surname of Lady Ashina's husband. In *XWDS*, Ouyang Xiu made two statements regarding the Shatuo Turks' surname. First, he stated that "'barbarians' (*yidi*) do not have surnames, so 'Zhuxie' just refers to the designation of a tribe." Second, he asserted, "their designation was Zhuxie but in the later generations they personally designated themselves as Shatuo and made Zhuxie their surname." In addition to these statements, he added that only after Zhuxie Jinzhong and his son Zhiyi in the early ninth century, were they designated as Shatuo with Zhuxie becoming their surname. However, it is likely that both "Shatuo" and "Zhuxie" were interchangeably used as surnames. Lady Ashina's epitaph mentions "Shatuo" two times. In the first line of the epitaph, the deceased is identified as the wife of "lord of Shatuo" (Shatuo *gong* 沙陀公). Also, in the middle of the script, it is mentioned that the deceased is married to "a person of Shatuo clan" 沙陀氏. It is common to use "lord" (*gong* 公) or "gentleman" (*jun* 君) for the first line of script.¹¹² Considering Lady Ashina died in 719, the use of "Shatuo" as a surname in the early eighth century is clear. After Shatuo Fuguo, *XTS* records that his son, Guduozi 骨咄支, succeeded him. Guduozi contributed to the Tang court by helping in the suppression of the An Lushan rebellion under Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-762). Following Guduozi came his

¹¹² Fan Wenli also mentioned that the style of writing "lord of Shatuo" (Shatuo *gong* 沙陀公) was the usual practice at the time. See Fan, *Li Keyong pingzhuan*, 9.

son, Zhuxie Jinzhong. *XTS*'s version of the Shatuo genealogy only matches with *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* starting from Zhuxie Jinzhong.

From Lady Ashina's epitaph, three facts become abundantly clear—Shatuo people had a connection with the Ashina clan, intermarriages were used to maintain high social status, and “Shatuo” was used as surname during the early eighth century. Such connections between Shatuo and other prominent Turkic groups prove that some of the Shatuo people actually could be considered as “noble stock” even before the Shatuo-Li family was created.

Shatuo as a People

Shatuo, the “Desert” People

The origin of the appellation, Shatuo, literally meaning “grand desert,” was first mentioned by Xue Juzheng in *JWDS*. The name comes from the Shatuo having originated from the “desert” (*qi* 磧) in the Beiting 北庭 area.¹¹³ Then did Shatuo name themselves as “Shatuo?” Ouyang Xiu's criticism of the preface of *JWDS*¹¹⁴ bespeaks the possibility that the name “Shatuo” was attributed to Taizong who divided the Tongluo and Pugu peoples into the “grand desert” region. It is not clear whether the name was created by and for themselves, but it is certain that the Tang

¹¹³ *JDWS* 25:331.

¹¹⁴ Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 38-39. *XWDS* 4:39-40. “In the preface [of *JWDS*], it is said, “Shatuo” refers to the “sand and gravel” of Beiting. In the time of Emperor Taizong of Tang, after defeating the Western Tujue, [Taizong] divided the people of Tongluo and Pugu into this “sand and gravel” and established the Shatuo Prefecture, making their progenitor Bayegu as provincial military governor and bequeathing the position to his descendants...” 其自序云：沙陀者，北庭之磧也。當唐太宗時，破西突厥諸部，分同羅、僕骨之人於此磧，置沙陀府，而以其始祖拔野古為都督，其傳子孫..

court used the name to install the “Shatuo Prefecture.” In this case, it is reasonable to think that the name itself was connected to the Tang institution, “Shatuo Prefecture.”

When talking about the dwellings of the nomadic peoples, “desert,” either written as *mo* 漠 or *qi* 磧, is frequently invoked in the medieval sources. In the desert, nomadic people “established their regimes” (*jianya* 建牙). For example, Xueyantuo’s Yi’nan, Zhenzhu Khan (d. 645), settled down under Mount Ötüken of “Grand Desert” 大漠.¹¹⁵ A Turkic prince, Ashina She’er 阿史那社爾, received a title and established a regime in the “northern desert” 磧北.¹¹⁶ The “desert” was also a boundary which divided subjugated nomadic people from other nomads. Emperor Taizong sent a letter with his imperial seal to Xueyantuo to placate and convince them to have friendly relations with the Turks. In this letter, he clarified that Xueyantuo people lived in the “north of desert” 磧北 while the Turks lived in the “south of desert” 磧南.¹¹⁷

This “desert” also frequently appears in the Tibetan document P.T. (Pelliot Tibétain) 1283, namely “Byang phyogs na rgyal po du bzhugs pa’I rabs gyi yi geo,” which was discovered in 1908 in Dunhuang by Paul Pelliot (1878-1945). Throughout the text, “beyond mountain of sandy desert” (Tibetan: Mye ngam bye ri rgyud chen po) represents the place which was inhabited by specific Turkic tribes.¹¹⁸ The area “beyond mountain of sandy desert” were where tall and big people whose bodies were three fathoms and hairy people with oxen hooves lived.¹¹⁹ Both Clauson and Venturi noted that the desert formed a boundary between reality and

¹¹⁵ *JTS* 199b:5344; *ZZTJ* 193:6061.

¹¹⁶ *JTS* 109:3288; *ZZTJ* 194:6117.

¹¹⁷ *JTS* 194a:5164; *ZZTJ* 195:6149; *Tang huiyao* 73:1315.

¹¹⁸ Federica Venturi, “An Old Tibetan Document on the Uighurs: A New Translation and Interpretation,” *Journal of Asian History* 42, no. 1 (2008): 9.

¹¹⁹ See Venturi, “An Old Tibetan Document on the Uighurs,” 27, 31-32.

mythology.¹²⁰ P.T. 1283 proves that any Turkic group could live adjacent to the desert. In this document which includes fragments of myriad Turkic mythology which have not been presented in contemporary Chinese sources, the “desert” is the stage where the Turkic groups originated from. The Shatuo appellation can be traced back to the “desert” where they came from, but it can be applicable to the any Turkic groups as they shared the “desert” as a common space.

From Many Peoples to One People

People who were called “Shatuo” coincidently migrated to the east where another desert area was located. Li Keyong’s epitaph only traces his ancestors back a few generations with the names of ancestors prior to Zhuxie Zhiyi conflicting with other historical records. Li Keyong’s earliest ancestor who is identifiable in the other records, Zhiyi, was the first to have migrated to the east in the ninth century after the Shatuo Turks resubmitted to the Tang court. Upon their migration to Tang territory, Emperor Xianzong made Fan Xichao 范希朝, who was then the Military Governor of Shuofang, Lingzhou, and Yanzhou 朔方靈鹽節度使, in charge of them.¹²¹ Fan Xichao’s strategy was to use the Shatuo to defend against adversaries. Thanks to this strategy, the Shatuo refugees from Fengxiang 鳳翔, Xingyuan 興元, and Taiyuan 太原 were able to assemble under one group. During this time, even Jinzhong’s brother, Gele Abo 葛勒阿波,

¹²⁰ Clauson mentioned, “de frontière entre les pays réels et les pays mythique.” See Gérard Clauson, “À propos du manuscrit Pelliot tibétain 1283,” *Journal Asiatique* 245 (1957): 13; Venturi, “An Old Tibetan Document on the Uighurs,” 9; Hayrettin İlhan Erkoç, “Elements of Turkic Mythology in the Tibetan Document P.T. 1283,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 61, no. 2 (2018): 303.

¹²¹ Fan Xichao was installed as the Military Governor of Shuofang, Lingzhou, and Yanzhou in the second year of Yuanhe 元和 (802), and later became Military Governor of Hedong 河東節度使 in 804 (*JTS* 14:421, 428; *XTS* 170:5168).

submitted to the Tang court.¹²² Starting from Zhiyi's generation, the Shatuo Turks assembled and lived in the Hedong 河東 area. The identifiable ancestors in Li Keyong's epitaph are those who migrated to the east and resided in the Hedong region. The migrated Shatuo Turks were eventually able to integrate and assemble under Zhiyi's leadership. The epitaph also records that Sige, the great-grandfather of Li Keyong, and Zhiyi, the grandfather, controlled Yin mountain 陰山, which is located in the "north of desert" 磧北, thus "beyond mountain of sandy desert" *Mye ngam bye ri rgyud chen po*. The Shatuo Turks, who were known to come from the Western Xinjiang region, finally moved to a region within the Tang territory which was in accordance with the meaning of their appellation, the "desert" Turks.

The early Shatuo might have existed as a single group of people. A ninth century record of An Lushan claims that the Shatuo and Zhuxie were separate groups of people. The following record refers to the Shatuo and Zhuxie as separate entities amongst the thirteen tribal groups (*buluo*).

This month, I installed Jingzhao administer-prefecturer, Prince Rong, [Li] Wan as Temporary Palace Commander, and Hexi and Longyou Military Governor, Prince of Xiping, Geshu Han as the Vice Commander. [I] let him (Geshu Han) control over all the *fan buluo* of the He and Long regions [including] Nula, Xiedie, Zhuxie, Qibi, Hun, Dailin, Xijie, Shatuo, Pengzi, Chumi, Tuyuhun, and Sijie, [in all] thirteen *buluo*; [He will] be supervising both *fan* and Han troops of two hundred thousand and eighty hundred of people who were stationed in Tongguan.¹²³

是月，我以京兆尹牧榮王琬為行宮元帥，以河西、隴右節度使、西平王哥舒翰為副元帥，領河、隴諸蕃部落奴刺、頡、跌、朱邪、契苾、渾、蹕林、奚結、沙陁、蓬子、處蜜、吐谷渾、恩結等一十三部落，督蕃漢兵二十一萬八千人鎮于潼關。

¹²² XTS 218:6155.

¹²³ Yao Runeng 姚如能, *An Lushan Shiji* 安祿山事蹟 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 97.

Upon the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion in 755, Emperor Xuanzong appoints his sixth son and Prince Rong, Li Wan, as a chief commander to guard the temporary palace and Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (699-757) as a vice commander to defeat An Lushan's military.¹²⁴ Geshu Han, who had a Turkic background, must have been the appropriate choice to deal with the thirteen multi-foreign groups including the Shatuo and Zhuxie. This passage suggests that the early Shatuo were not yet in the form of an incorporated Shatuo-Zhuxie group.¹²⁵

It is not rare in history that one group consists of heterogeneous subgroups. According to Walter Pohl, people in the early medieval period were far less homogenous than people usually thought. He gives the example of the Lombards who incorporated the Suevians and Alamans, Gepids, Bulgarians, Romans, Saxons, Romans, Goths, etc.¹²⁶ The "polyethnic" peoples co-existed in a people. Shatuo's case was very similar. The "Shatuo" and "Zhuxie," which were used to indicate separate groups of peoples merged and became a Shatuo people. The appellation, "Shatuo," clearly starts to represent many different groups of peoples. For instance, not only the Li family, but also the Shi 石 family of Later Jin and the Liu 劉 family of Later Han were members of the Shatuo Turks. Take for instance the Shi family. *JWDS* records that the Shi family came from Shi Fen 石奮 (220-124 BCE), a chancellor during the Han dynasty.¹²⁷ Ouyang Xiu's record differs by stating that the Shi family were from "western barbarians" (*xiyi* 西夷) and the origin of their surname is unknown.¹²⁸ Regardless of their unidentified origin, both dynastic histories agree that the ancestors of the Shi family followed the Zhuxie people upon

¹²⁴ Li Wan's installment as the chief commander is seen in *JTS* 107:3262.

¹²⁵ See Barenghi, "Representations of Descent," 53-54.

¹²⁶ Walter Pohl, "Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies," in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, eds. Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 13-24.

¹²⁷ *JWDS* 75:977.

¹²⁸ *XWDS* 8:77. Also *ZZTJ*'s commentator followed *XWDS*'s record. See *ZZTJ* 280:9138.

their submission to the Tang court during the reign of Emperor Xianzong and resided in Mount Yin.¹²⁹

The Liu family's case is similar to the case of the Shi family. Both *JWDS* and *XWDS* record that the first emperor of Later Han, Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (r. 947-948), had Shatuo background.¹³⁰ Notably, *WDHY* makes an unlikely connection between the Shatuo-Liu family and the Eastern Han imperial family. According to *WDHY*, Liu Zhiyuan's great great-grandfather Liu Tuan 劉湍 was the descendant of Liu Bing 劉昞, who was the eighth son of Emperor Xianzong (r. 57-75) of Eastern Han.¹³¹ Regardless of whether the Liu family originated from the imperial family of Eastern Han or not, undoubtedly, they were members of the Shatuo Turks.

Even though the specific criteria of becoming a member of the Shatuo is unknown, nine Sogdian tribes also seem to have a connection to the Shatuo after Zhiyi defected to the Tang court and moved to the Hedong area. After Zhiyi migrated to the east, there was a petition from Liu Gongchuo 柳公綽 (768-832), who was in charge of Hedong, asking the emperor to give an office to Zhiyi in order to take care of the frontiers as the people of "Nine Surnames of Six Prefectures" 九姓六州 were afraid of the Shatuo. According to Li Keyong's epitaph, this was the time when Zhiyi was appointed as the Commissioner of the Shatuo Three Armies 三軍沙陀都知兵馬使. The presence of the Shatuo three *buluo* 沙陀三部落, Shatuo 沙陀, Anqing 安慶, and Sage 薩葛, during the Kaicheng 開成 (836-840) years of Emperor Wenzong 文宗 (r. 827-840),¹³² shows that their connections with other ethnic groups, mainly with the Sogdians, were

¹²⁹ *JWDS* 75:977; *XWDS* 8:77.

¹³⁰ *JWDS* 99:1231; *XWDS* 10:99.

¹³¹ *WDHY* 1:11-2. *ZZTJ*'s commentator, Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230–1302), also followed *WDHY*'s account. See *ZZTJ* 286:9327.

¹³² *CFYG* 359:4265-1.

created after Zhiyi was in charge of the Nine Surnames. Especially, many generals with Sogdian surnames are known to have Shatuo backgrounds.¹³³ The history of the discussions of the Shatuo suggest that they slowly started to draw and add other peoples under their appellation, with “Shatuo” later developing into an umbrella term that referred to multiple ethnic groups under one appellation.

Becoming Royalty

Starting from Zhiyi’s son, Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心, the Zhuxie-Shatuo family finally changed their name upon his receipt of the Tang imperial surname, Li. Emperor Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859-873) bestowed upon him the given name “Guochang” 國昌, literally “a flourishing state.” His receipt of this given name was due to his contribution in the suppression of Pang Xun’s 龐勛 (d. 869) rebellion in 869. Although there are many cases of bestowing imperial surnames during the Tang dynasty, Li Guochang’s receipt of the imperial surname is quite distinct from the rest.

Emperors “bestowing a surname” is not a unique phenomenon in Chinese dynastic history. Particularly, emperors bestowed imperial surnames if an individual rendered distinguished services. Some examples can be seen during the Han dynasty. Xiang Bo 項伯 (d. 192), uncle of Xiang Yu 項羽, received the imperial surname of Han for his contribution in

¹³³ See Moribe Yutaka 森部豊, “Tōmatsu godai no daihoku ni okeru sogudokei Tokketsu to Sada” 唐末五代の代北におけるソグド系突厥と沙陀, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 62, no. 4 (2004): 660-693. Moribe analyzes the close connections between “Sogdian Turks” ソグド系突厥 and the Shatuo Turks and how they were used as “military force” during the Five Dynasties period. Moribe’s table of generals with Sogdian backgrounds employed by the Shatuo Turks (pp. 665-667) is especially helpful to understand their relationship.

saving Liu Bang's 劉邦 life at the Feast at Swan Goose Gate 鴻門宴.¹³⁴ In early Tang, at the time of the founding of the state, Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618-626) bestowed the imperial surname to his founding contributors. For example, Xu Shiji 徐世勣, who defected to Emperor Gaozu, was bestowed the imperial surname and became Li Shiji 李世勣.¹³⁵ Moreover, non-Han rulers who submitted to the Tang court frequently received the imperial surname. For instance, Ashina Simo 阿史那思摩 (583-645), a Turkic qaghan installed by the Tang court, was bestowed the Tang imperial surname and called Li Simo 李思摩.¹³⁶

In his 1977 article, "The Bestowal of Surnames under the Western Wei-Northern Chou: A Case of Counter-Acculturation," Albert E. Dien contended that according to "Chinese tradition," notable people were bestowed imperial surnames and "adopted into the royal lineage." However, he pointed out that the Western Wei-Northern Chou's case of bestowal diverged from this "Chinese tradition." He points to the Edict of 554 issued by Yuwen Tai 宇文泰 (507-556), the future posthumous Emperor Wen 文皇帝 of Northern Zhou, which specifies that soldiers under the generals' command should also take their generals' surnames.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 7:338; Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1b:49; *ZZTJ* 11:354. Also see Albert E. Dien, "The Bestowal of Surnames under the Western Wei-Northern Chou: A Case of Counter-Acculturation," *T'oung Pao* 63 (1977): 142.

¹³⁵ *JTS* 1:9 and 67:2484; *XTS* 93:3818; *ZZTJ* 186:5823; *Tang huiyao* 65:1141.

¹³⁶ *Tang huiyao* 94:1690.

¹³⁷ See Dien, "The Bestowal of Surnames under the Western Wei-Northern Chou: A Case of Counter-Acculturation," 137-177. This is the Edict of 554. "Formerly the Wei ruled Thirty-six Tribes and Ninety-nine Clans. Later many were cut off and ended. Now, we will consider the generals of highest merit to be the descendants of the Thirty-six Tribes and those next in merit to be the descendants of the Ninety-nine Clans. The soldiers under their command are also to alter and take the surnames [of their generals]." 魏氏之初，統國三十六，大姓九十九，後多絕滅。至是，以諸將功高者為三十六國後，次功者為九十九姓後，所統軍人，亦改從其姓。See Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 et al., *Zhou shu* 周書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 2:36, and also *Bei shi* 9:329). The purpose of the edict was to revive Xianbei surnames. However, due to this reformation, the soldiers under the generals inevitably had to change their surnames regardless of their origin. Translation also from Dien in page 141.

The Appendix to this chapter shows the cases of the bestowal of the imperial surname during the Tang dynasty.¹³⁸ As can be seen, these bestowals cases were attributed to an individual's meritorious military service against invasions and coups, and/or the individual's submission to the Tang court. Without regard of their origins or ethnicity, the Tang emperors bestowed their imperial surname to significant generals. The bestowal cases clustered around six specific occasions: the establishment of Tang during the reign of Emperor Gaozu, the expansion of the empire under Emperor Taizong, consolidation of court power by Wu Zetian, the An-Shi rebellion during the reigns of Emperors Xuanzong and Suzong, the rise and demise of the Uyghurs, and the eunuchs/military coups during late Tang.

However, importantly, not all the surname recipients were registered in the imperial lineage. Bestowal of surnames can be separated into two categories depending on whether the recipients were registered in the imperial clan registry or not. In the *Institutional History of Tang* (*Tang Huiyao* 唐會要), under the entry of "Court of the Imperial Clan" 宗正寺, an office which was in charge of the imperial lineage, exists a record of people whose names were entered into the imperial registry. Amongst the seven cases, five cases were from the early Tang period between 618 and 621 by Emperor Gaozu. The other two cases were Zhang Zhongzhi 張忠志 during the reign of Emperor Suzong and Li Guochang under Emperor Yizong. Li Guochang's name was officially registered in the branch of Prince of Zheng 鄭王.¹³⁹ Since there are two Prince of Zheng branches, it is not clear which branch the Shatuo-Li family belonged to, but it is

¹³⁸ Jonathan Karam Skaff thoroughly studied the bestowal between 580 and 800. See Jonathan Karam Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*, 227–37.

¹³⁹ *XTS* 218:6156 and 75b:3453; *Tang Huiyao* 65:1144; *JWDS* 25:332.

noticeable that his registry as an imperial member was decided upon the bestowal of the imperial surname.¹⁴⁰

Ever since Li Guochang was bestowed the imperial surname, his sons and grandsons all used the surname. Li Keyong was especially successful in expanding the Li family with one of his key strategies being the creation of a military inherently based on the adoption system. The Shatuo-Li family gradually expanded using this adoption system and even adoptive sons changed their surnames to Li. In this way, Dien's "Chinese tradition" of bestowing surname was not applicable to the Shatuo-Li family. Rather, it was a combination of "Chinese tradition" and Yuwen Tai's Western Wei-Northern Zhou tradition of bestowing surnames to "the soldiers under the command" 所統軍人, or in this case, to "the adopted sons under the command." The imperial surname Li Guochang received eventually provided his descendants with a tool for legitimation to succeed Tang.¹⁴¹ When Li Keyong's son, Li Cunxu, restored the Tang dynasty, there was no remarkable resistance to his rule which stands in stark contrast to the series of disobedience displayed by other military leaders upon the establishment of Later Liang by Zhu Wen.

Especially with the newly bestowed imperial surname, the Shatuo-Li family played a pivotal role in the consolidation of the Shatuo group. Borrowing from Reinhard Wenskus's concept of *Traditionskern* or "kernel of tradition," I similarly frame the Shatuo-Li family as having played the *kernel* group by absorbing other non-Han groups to create a federation even

¹⁴⁰ It is noticeable that Li Guochang's rival, Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (865-924), who was born as Song Wentong 宋文通, also changed his name in accordance with his receipt of the imperial surname. However, Li Maozhen was not listed in the imperial registry.

¹⁴¹ Later, Li Guochang's grandson, Li Cunxu 李存勖 established a state called "Tang." He installed seven shrines for three generations of his own ancestors and four emperors (Emperors Gaozu, Taizong, Yizong, and Zhaozong of Tang), to become the legitimate successor of Tang. *XWDS* 5:44-45.

before the fall of the Tang dynasty. At least starting from the time of Li Keyong's grandfather, Zhiyi, whom the Tang emperor appointed as Yinshan Garrison Area Commander-in-chief, Li-Keyong's clan took the lead role in the expansion of the entire Shatuo group with the inclusion of Sogdians and other Turkic groups. Finally, with the bestowal of the imperial surname, Li Keyong's clan truly became the *kernel* of the Shatuo Turks by satisfying the condition of being military and aristocratic "elite." As a result of incorporating other groups of people under the flag of their appellation while also legitimizing themselves as members of the Tang imperial family, Shatuo became a poly-ethnopolitical federation centered around the Shatuo-Li family, rather than a mono-ethnic polity.

Geopolitical Ties: Disappearance of the Shatuo Turkic Appellation

When the Shatuo Turks came to rule three out of the Five Dynasties, the Shatuo Turkic rulers interestingly neglected their Shatuo identity in their epitaphs, an important medium for self-identification. Especially after the Shatuo-Li family established the Later Tang dynasty and became successors of Tang, their identification as Shatuo is rare within the records. Towards the end of the Five Dynasties and the early Song periods, on the surface it is quite difficult to distinguish who had been a part of the Shatuo group. Notably, such abrupt disappearances of groups are not rare phenomena. Many tribal groups have disappeared throughout history and sometimes reappeared.¹⁴² A similar phenomenon of the disappearance of a group can be found in the case of the Avars. The Avars were a nomadic people who arrived in Europe from Central-

¹⁴² See Peter J. Heather, "Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes," in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, eds. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 95-116.

Inner Asia in the sixth century and established khanates in the eastern part of Europe. Although they remained until the ninth century, it is commonly accepted that they quickly disappeared after being conquered by Charlemagne (r. 800-814). Walter Pohl writes in his book, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk im Mitteleuropa, 567-822 n. Chr.*, on the disappearance of the Avars.

“When the name ‘Avar’ no longer designated a political entity that could boast a connection with the ‘honor antiquus’ of the khaganate, it quickly lost its power of attraction.... It makes no sense to designate this mixed population, or a hypothetical element in them, with the old name.”¹⁴³

According to Pohl, the political entity mattered in terms of the existence of the Avars. Once, the political entity was dismantled, the designation “Avars” had also lost the attraction of its peoples, leading to remnants of Avar people unwilling to identify themselves as Avars. In this sense, Pohl analyzes that Avar identity was based on a political identity.

Like the Avars, the Shatuo Turks no longer seemed to identify themselves as “Shatuo” after the Shatuo prefecture, a Tang institution, became obsolete after the fall of Tang and upon the founding of the Shatuo Turkic dynasties. Consequently, there are rare mentions of the Shatuo Turks either as a group or as individuals in subsequent Song and Liao dynastic sources. In this sense, we can speculate that the Shatuo identity was strongly connected to the Shatuo prefecture, a territorial and political vehicle, maintained by the Shatuo-Li family. Once the Tang Dynasty collapsed, the Shatuo rulers most likely found more significance in identifying themselves as successors of Tang rather than as Shatuo. There are several cases of Shatuo descendants in the

¹⁴³ English translation by William Sayers. See Walter Pohl, *The Avars*, trans. William Sayers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 392. The original version is seen in Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk im Mitteleuropa, 567-822 n. Chr.* (München: Beck, 1988), 325. “als der Awarename keine politisch e Einheit mehr bezeichnere, die an den „honor antiquus“ des alten Khaganates anschließen konnte, verlor er rasch seine Anziehungskraft... Diese Gruppierungen mit dem alten Namen als ‚Awaren‘ zu bezeichnen, ist nicht sinnvoll.”

Five Dynasties and the early Song and Liao dynasties which can be used to elucidate this phenomenon.

The Cases of the Shatuo-Shi Family

A Shatuo Turkic epitaph was excavated in the Liaoning Province 遼寧省 and obtained by the Museum of Liaoning Province in 2000. It was the epitaph of Shi Chonggui 石重貴 (r. 942-947), also known as Emperor Chu 出帝 (literally “Deposed Emperor”), the second and last emperor of the second Shatuo Turkic Later Jin dynasty.¹⁴⁴ The Shi family who most likely had Sogdian backgrounds,¹⁴⁵ joined the ranks of the Shatuo Turks in the early ninth century and politically succeeded the Shatuo-Li family’s Later Tang. However, in the mid-tenth century during the reign of Shi Chonggui, the Later Jin dynasty was overthrown by the Khitan Liao, which resulted in him being sent to Liao territory after his deposal. Consequently, he died homeless in Liao with his epitaph titled as “Epitaph of Deceased Prince of Jin of the Great Khitan State” 大契丹國故晉王墓誌銘. His ancestry can be found in the first line of the epitaph.

The prince’s surname was Shi; taboo name was Chonggui. [He] was a descendant of King of Zhao, [Shi] Le, and the successor of [Emperor] Gaozu of Jin. In the seventh year of Tianfu reign (942) when Gaozu passed away, he was enthroned as emperor in front of [Gaozu’s] coffin and [he] changed the reign name to Kaiyun.

¹⁴⁴ For further analysis of Shi Chonggui’s epitaph, see Dou Xingzhi 都興智 and Tian Likun 田立坤, “Hou Jin Shi Chonggui Shi Yanxu muzhiming kao” 后晉石重貴石延煦墓誌銘考, *Wenwu* 文物, no. 11 (2004): 87-95. The image of the epitaph is from the same article in page 88. Also, see Qi Wei 齊偉, “Liaoning sheng bowuguan cang Shi Chonggui muzhiming kaoshi” 遼寧省博物館藏《石重貴墓誌銘》考釋, *Liao Jin lishi yu kaogu* 遼金歷史與考古 (2013): 299-304.

¹⁴⁵ Moribe included the Shatuo-Shi family in the category of “Sogdian Turks.” See Moribe, “Tōmatsu godai no daihoku ni okeru sogudokei Tokketsu to Sada,” 665-667.

王姓石氏，諱重貴，趙王勒之裔，晉高祖之嗣也。天福七年，高祖崩，即皇帝位於
 柩前，改元為開運。

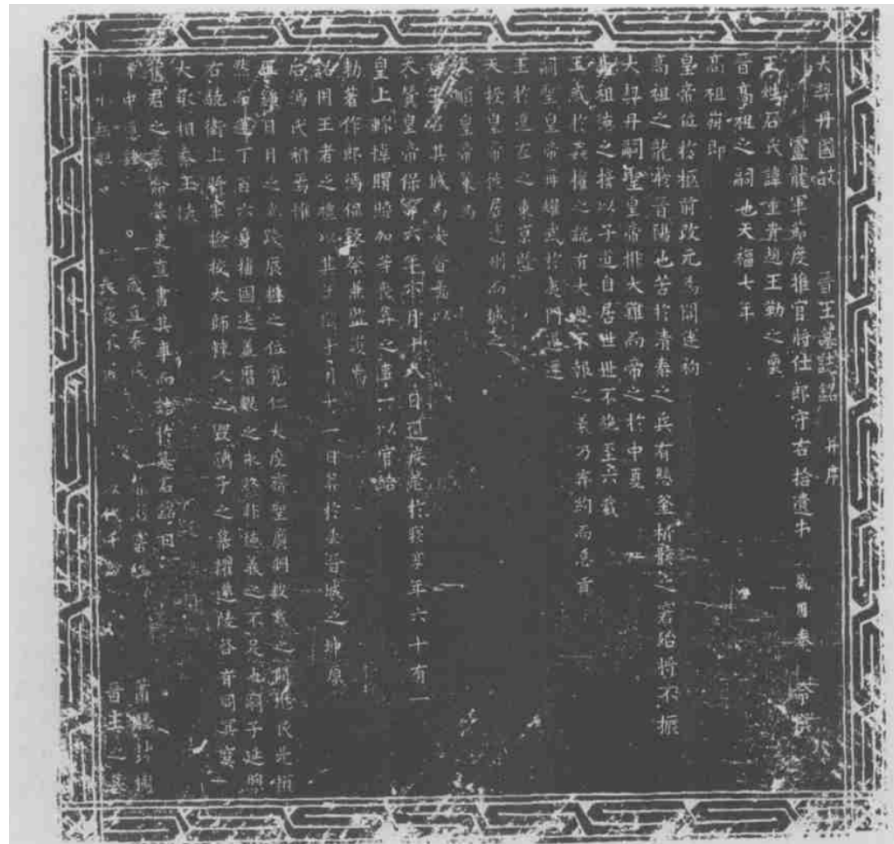


Figure 1.2: Epitaph of Shi Chonggui

The rest of Shi Chonggui's epitaph explains how Shi was dethroned due to disloyal officials and how Shi Chonggui received his appointment as Prince of Jin 晉王 by Liao Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (r. 951-969). Considering his status in Liao as a deposed ruler of an enemy state, Shi Chonggui most likely lacked the freedom of expression necessary to freely chronicle his life in the epitaph. As everything had to be commissioned by the Liao rulers, the only part of the epitaph which reflected his intentions and thoughts might have been his ancestry and his identity.

Surprisingly, his ancestry is connected to Shi Le 石勒 (r. 330–333), the founder of Later Zhao 後趙 (319–351), one of the Sixteen Kingdoms. Shi Le, originally called Bei 匐, came from non-Han background and was later given the surname Shi by his shepherd-master.¹⁴⁶ Shi Le is also known to be a descendant of Jie 羯,¹⁴⁷ one of the “Five Barbarians” (*wuhu* 五胡). Yet, Shi Chonggui’s connection with Shi Le is not seen in any of the official records besides his epitaph. From the perspective of the Shatuo-Shi family, connecting their lineage to Shi Le would have seemed a better alternative to Shi Que 石碣 and Shi Fen 石奮 (d.124 BC), who are cited as their ancestors in *JWDS*.¹⁴⁸ Analogous to Li Keyong’s case with his drawing a connection to Xueyantuo on his epitaph, there is no evidence connecting Shi Chonggui’s claim to the Shi Le lineage. Like Li Keyong, there is a possibility that Shi Chonggui fictively created his connection to the Shi family of Later Zhao. Considering Shi Chonggui’s birth mother’s surname was An 安,¹⁴⁹ it is likely that the Shatuo-Shi family had intermarriages with other Sogdian descents through the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods, which also proves various groups of Sogdian peoples were also part of Shatuo.¹⁵⁰ Yet, the epitaph did not mention anything about the Shatuo Turks. Furthermore, Shi Chonggui’s first and adoptive son Shi Yanxu’s 石延煦 (928–987)

¹⁴⁶ *Wei shu* 95:2047–2048. Considering Shi Le’s grandfather and father were called Yeyiyu 耶奕于 and Zhouhezhu 周曷朱 respectively, it seems like there was no surname before Shi Le.

¹⁴⁷ Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 104:2707; *Wei shu* 95:2047.

¹⁴⁸ In *JWDS*, Shi Jingtang’s 石敬瑭 (r. 936–942) ancestors were recorded as Shi Que 石碣, a Grand Master 大夫 of Wei 衛 and Shi Fen 石奮, a Prime Minister of Han. See *JWDS* 75:977.

¹⁴⁹ See Du Xiaohong 杜曉紅 and Li Yufeng 李宇峰, “Liaoning Chaoyang xian faxian Liaodai Houjin Li taihou, An taifei muzhi” 遼寧朝陽縣發現遼代後晉李太后、安太妃墓誌 *Bianjiang kaogu yanjiu* 邊疆考古研究 16.2 (2014): 61–68.

¹⁵⁰ The great-grandfather of the first emperor of Later Jin, was married to Lady An 安氏; Shi Jingtang’s grandfather married Lady Mi 米氏 and his father married Lady He 何氏. Shi Chonggui’s biological father and Shi Jingtang’s brother, Shi Jingru 石敬儒, married Lady An 安氏. For four generations, Shi family members married those of Sogdian descent. *JWDS* 75:977–978 and 81:1067. Also, see Moribe, “Tōmatsu godai no daihoku ni okeru sogudokei Tokketsu to Sada,” 666.

epitaph records the deceased as the grandson of Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (r. 936-942), the first emperor of Later Jin, and the first son of Shi Chonggui.¹⁵¹ Correspondingly, neither his affiliation with Shi Le of Later Zhao nor his identification as one of Shatuo descent is found in Shi Yanxu's epitaph.

In addition to these two Shi imperial men, Empress Dowager Li's 李太后 (d. 950) epitaph was excavated in 2011 in the Liaoning Province.¹⁵² Empress Dowager Li was a daughter



Figure 1.3: Epitaph of Empress Dowager Li

¹⁵¹ Shi Yanxu's epitaph records that he is the first son of Shi Chonggui. However, *XWDS* writes that Shi Chonggui made Shi Yanxu as his son. *XWDS* 17:186-188.

¹⁵² For the details of Empress Dowager Li's epitaph, see Du Xiaohong and Li Yufeng, "Liaoning Chaoyang xian faxian Liaodai Houjin Li taihou, An taifei muzhi," 61-68. The image of the epitaph was used from the same article in page 62.

of Li Siyuan 李嗣源, Emperor Mingzong of Later Tang, and married to Shi Jingtang. In her case, both her husband, as Shi family, and she, as Li family, belonged to the Shatuo group. Upon the capture of Shi Chonggui by Liao Taizong in 947, Empress Dowager Li was also sent to the Liao territory and was under the control of the Liao court until she died in Jianzhou 建州 (current Liaoning Province).¹⁵³ It is not certain if it was her or her family members' intention to inscribe a brief epitaph, but only 61 characters were written to describe her life. Amongst the 61 characters, it only includes her place of origin, Taiyuan, where the Shatuo people's base was, and her title as empress of Later Jin, once again without mentioning Shatuo.¹⁵⁴

The Case of Grand Princess Fuqing

A Shatuo princess Grand Princess of Fuqing's 福慶長公主 (d. 932) epitaph was excavated in 1971.¹⁵⁵ She was the first daughter of Li Keyong and Empress Zhenjian née Cao 貞簡曹太后.¹⁵⁶ She was married to Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥 (d. 934) who was a general of Later Tang and later

¹⁵³ She died in 950 only three years after Liao conquered Later Jin. She resided in a distant area from Jian Prefecture and suffered from a lack of medicine. Empress Dowager Li's biography is seen in *XWDS* 17:175-179.

¹⁵⁴ The humble nature of her epitaph compared to her status perhaps reveals her lack of resources upon her death. Her short epitaph is comparable to that of Li Jiancheng 李建成 (589-626), a murdered older brother of Li Shimin 李世民, Tang Taizong. Li Jiancheng was the heir apparent of Emperor Gaozu, but was assassinated at the Xuanwu Gate Incident, a palace coup directed by Li Shimin, the future Taizong. His epitaph consists of 55 characters. This briefness of his epitaph must have been related to the censorship as the epitaph was buried during Taizong's reign. For the details of Li Jiancheng's epitaph, see Mai Erqiang 賈二強, "Shi Tang Li jiancheng ji fei Zheng guanyin muzhi" 釋唐李建成及妃鄭觀音墓誌, *Tang shi luncong* 唐史論叢 no.1 (2014): 229-236.

¹⁵⁵ For the excavation of Meng Zhixiang and his empress Grand Princess Fuqing's epitaphs, see Zhong Daquan 鍾大全, "Hou Shu Meng Zhixiang yu fuqing chang gongzhu muzhiming," 後蜀孟知祥墓與福慶長公主墓誌銘, *Wenwu* 文物 (1982): 15-20.

¹⁵⁶ *ZZTJ*, *XWDS*, *Shiguo Cunqiu* wrote that she was a daughter of Li Keyong's brother, Li Kerang 李克讓. *ZZTJ* 168:8755; *XWDS* 64:797; *SGCQ* 50:1

the founder of Later Shu, one of the Ten Kingdoms. Since she died before her husband was enthroned as the emperor of the independent state, Later Shu 後蜀 (934-965), her epitaph only named her as the princess of Later Tang, but she was eventually installed as empress posthumously.¹⁵⁷ In her epitaph, she was identified as a daughter of Li Keyong and a sister of Zhuangzong of Later Tang without any specifics about their or her ethnic background. In this sense, her identity was associated to that of being part of the Li imperial family rather than being Shatuo.

The Cases of Li Chengsi's Descendants

There are other cases such as the descendants of Shatuo general Li Chengsi 李承嗣 (866-920). Li Chengsi was a general who assisted Li Keyong in his suppression of the Huang Chao rebellion. Even though it is not clearly mentioned when his family or himself became Shatuo, the record in *JWDS* identifies him as a “Shatuo general” 沙陀將.¹⁵⁸ In 897, with another Shatuo general Shi Yan 史儼, Li Chengsi defected to Yang Xingmi 楊行密 (852-905), who was at the time the Prince of Hongnong Commandry 弘農郡王 in Huinan 淮南. Both recognized as being great generals, Li Chengsi and Shi Yan not only were welcomed by Yang Xingmi but also received important positions from him. Ever since this relocation, Li Chengsi's descendants became residents in the Wu-Southern Tang states located south of the Five Dynasties.

¹⁵⁷ She was installed as empress posthumously when her husband Meng Zhixiang became emperor. See *SGCQ* 50:1.

¹⁵⁸ *JWDS* 134:1781.

The epitaph of Li Chengsi's daughter, Li Song 李娥 (906-934), was excavated in Yangzhou 揚州 in 2013.¹⁵⁹ In her epitaph, her renowned father was mentioned, yet there is no mention of her family's connection to the Shatuo people; rather, it is recorded that Li Chengsi followed Prince of Jin 晉王, Li Keyong. Moreover, the epitaph of the wife of Li Chengsi's grandson also identifies Li Chengsi as the Governor of Chu Prefecture 楚州刺史. The deceased's father-in-law and Li Chengsi's son, Li Du's 李度, is recorded as Secretary of Ministry of Rites 禮部尚書.¹⁶⁰ No other information indicates that her husband's family had connections with Shatuo.

Interestingly, Li Song's epitaph traces her genealogy to Li Hao 李暹, the founder of Western Liang (400-421). Li Hao of Western Liang is known for being the forefather of the Tang dynasty imperial family. For this reason, Li Song's epitaph refers to her family origin as Longxi 隴西. On the contrary, *JWDS* records that Li Chengsi was from Yanmen of Dai Prefecture 代州鴈門.¹⁶¹ While *JWDS* records Li Chengsi's father as Li Zuofang 李佐方 without additional information, the epitaph writes that Li Chengsi's father is Li Zhongfang 李仲方, the Right Adjutant of Area Command of Lu Prefecture 潞州大都督府右司馬 and Acting Secretary of Ministry of Defense 兵部尚書.¹⁶² In addition, although none of the compiled records mention the grandfather of Li Chengsi, Li Song's epitaph records that her great-grandfather was Li Siqing

¹⁵⁹ For research on Li Song's epitaph and its full text, see Hu Yaofei 胡耀飛, "Yang Wu zhengquan Daibei jiazuo de bentuhua—yi 'Li Song muzhi' suojian Yanmen Lishi weili" 楊吳政權代北家族的本土化——以《李娥墓誌》所見雁門李氏為例, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, no. 1 (2018): 166-175.

¹⁶⁰ Dong Gao 董誥, *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 887:9271.

¹⁶¹ *JWDS* 55:742.

¹⁶² Perhaps the confusion comes from the similarity between the characters *zhong* 仲 and *zuo* 佐. It might be possible that *JWDS* was misrecorded, or later printers miscarved, the character.

李思勅 who was the Commander of the Zhou Prefecture 涿州刺史. It is unclear if Li Chengsi's family originated from Li Hao of Western Liang or if his grandfather and father held prestigious offices,¹⁶³ as no other sources of them remain. Like the case of Shi family, it is highly likely they created their own genealogy. There is also the possibility that they might have received the imperial surname from the Shatuo-Li family. As some of the generals inherited the surname from Li Keyong, it might be possible that Li Chengsi's family adopted the place of origin of the Li imperial family as their own. These two excavated epitaphs clearly show exemplary cases of the self-identification of Shatuo. In particular, these cases show the perspective of northern immigrants in a southern state.¹⁶⁴ The Shatuo general Li Chengsi's descendants generationally received high offices in Wu/Southern Tang and their self-identification as Shatuo is nowhere to be found.

The Case of Empress Song of Taizu of Song

After the Song dynasty was established, many of the Shatuo generals received offices from the Song court. Amongst the descendants of the Shatuo Turks during the Song dynasty, there was one crucial figure who belonged to both the Shatuo Turkic and Song imperial families. It was Empress Xiaozhang née Song 孝章宋皇后, who was the principal consort of Taizu 太祖 (r. 960-976) of Song, Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤. She was married to Taizu and installed as his empress.

¹⁶³ Hu Yaofei is also doubtful that Li Chengsi's father Li Zhongfang received the actual office, as at the end of the Tang dynasty, the system of provincial military governors (*dudu* 都督) was nominal. See Hu Yaofei, "Yang Wu zhengquan Daibei jiazhu de bentuhua," 171.

¹⁶⁴ Hu Yaofei argues that the three generations of Li Chengsi's family members gradually became "localized" 本土化. Hu Yaofei, "Yang Wu zhengquan Daibei jiazhu de bentuhua," 173-175.

Her paternal grandmother was Princess Yining 義寧公主, a daughter of Li Cunxu, Emperor Zhuangzong, and her mother was Princess Yongning 永寧公主, a daughter of Gaozu 高祖 (r. 947-948) of Later Han. Both her grandmother and mother were from Shatuo Turkic families. Even after both her grandmother's and mother's home dynasties became defunct, her cousin's family ruled over another Shatuo state, Northern Han (951-979), located between Song and Liao.

Her appointment as empress is briefly mentioned in *History of Song* (*Song shi* 宋史). In 967, she visited the court with her mother and received clothes and hats from Taizu. A year later, she was installed as empress.¹⁶⁵ It must have been Taizu's decision to use marriage as a tool to incorporate the newly established society, especially when the Song court was still confronting Northern Han in the north and Southern Tang in the south. In this sense, Empress Song must have been the perfect candidate as she not only represented two of the Five Dynasties, but also belonged to both Shatuo and Han peoples. Even though Empress Song was the direct descendant of two Shatuo imperial Li and Liu families, her identity as Shatuo does not appear anywhere in *History of Song*. Her paternal grandfather Song Tinghao's 宋廷浩 (d. 937) epitaph was excavated in 2001 in Luoyang.¹⁶⁶ In the epitaph, Song Tinghao's wife, Princess Yining, is described as a mere "Longxi Commandery Mistress née Li" 隴西郡君李氏 rather than a princess. It is obvious that her background is identified as "Li clan of Longxi" due to his great-grandfather Li Guochang's receipt of the surname Li.

According to *Sushui Jiwen* 涑水記聞 (literally, "Records of Rumors from Sushui"), which was a collection of miscellaneous anecdotes compiled by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-

¹⁶⁵ See Toqto'a 脱脱, *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 242:8608.

¹⁶⁶ For the excavation of Song Tinghao's epitaph and its script, see Zhao Zhenhua 趙振華, "Wudai Song Tinghao muzhi kao" 五代宋廷浩墓誌考, *Huaxia kaogu* 華夏考古 (2003): 71-76.

1086), Empress Song played an important role in terms of succession upon the death of Taizu. When Taizu died, Empress Song allowed a eunuch to call the fourth son, Zhao Defang 趙德芳 (959–981), to the palace. However, the eunuch instead called Taizu’s ambitious younger brother Zhao Kuangyi 趙匡義.¹⁶⁷ Recognizing her ambitious brother-in-law’s intention, Empress Song immediately asked him to spare her and her sons’ lives. Since this story is written as an anecdote, we cannot be sure if it was based in fact. Nevertheless, the anecdote indicates the significant role that Empress Song had in the designation of the next successor, although she was not successful in her attempts. Zhao Kuangyi eventually was installed as Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997), the second ruler of Song. It is also well-known that Taizong treated Empress Song poorly. When Empress Song died in 995, Taizong sent her body to her sister’s, Grand Princess of Yan’s 燕國長公主, place and did not allow court officials to wear mourning attire for the empress.¹⁶⁸ It might be possible that Taizong was reluctant to treat her well due to his succession or her affiliation with the Northern Han imperial family. Notably, by receiving support from Liao, Northern Han, which her maternal family ruled over, had been a troublesome enemy of Song. With Song Taizong’s defeat of Northern Han in 979, the last Shatuo Turkic state disappeared.

Conclusion

The origins of the Shatuo Turks are quite unclear with sources contradicting one another. Among the four histories *XTS*, *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* which detail the ancestry of the Shatuo Turks, *JWDS* states that the Shatuo originated from Bayegu, while *XTS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* record the

¹⁶⁷ Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sushui Jiwen* 涑水記聞 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe), 1:18-19.

¹⁶⁸ *Song shi* 193:9795.

Shatuo as having originated from Chuyue. However, Li Keyong's epitaph records neither Bayegu nor Chuyue as his progenitor and instead claims Yidu, a fourth-generation lord of Xueyantuo, as his ancestor. Although it is highly probable that this connection is fictive, Li Keyong's family self-identification as Xueyantuo proves to be quite convenient as ancestors as the Xueyantuo was a powerful nomadic group comparable to that of the Tang dynasty in the first half of the seventh century. However, even amongst this dissonance, these sources all are in accordance with one another starting from the time of Zhuxie Zhiyi, Li Keyong's grandfather. Yet even prior to Zhuxie Zhiyi, it is undeniable that there was a group called the Shatuo in the seventh and eighth centuries when considering the epitaph of Lady Ashina, the eldest daughter of Shixing Qaghan of Western Turkic Khanate. In the epitaph, her husband is referred to "lord of Shatuo" (Shatuo *gong*), which proves that "Shatuo" was used as surname.

Starting from Zhuxie Zhiyi, who became the provincial military governor of Mount Yin in the Hedong region, the Shatuo developed to become a heterogenous, polyethnic group. The appellation Shatuo, which literally means "grand desert," became a banner and appellation under which all Turkic groups could gather. Shatuo expanded from a people into a federation of peoples consisting of not only Turkic groups, but also other ethnic groups including the Sogdians like the Shi family who lived in the region. What becomes readily apparent is that Li Keyong's clan took the lead role in the expansion of the entire Shatuo group. Finally, with the bestowal of the imperial surname, Li Keyong's clan truly became the *kernel* group of the Shatuo Turks in accordance with the *Traditionskern* model by satisfying the condition of being military and aristocratic "elite." As a result of incorporating other groups of people under the flag of their appellation while also legitimizing themselves as members of the Tang imperial family, Shatuo

became a poly-ethnopolitical federation centered around the Shatuo-Li family, rather than a mono-ethnic polity.

Yet, a strange phenomenon occurs after the founding of the Shatuo Turkic dynasties where there seems to be a lack of self-identification as Shatuo. This occurrence seems consistent across space and time when viewing epitaphs beyond those of just the rulers of the Shatuo Turkic dynasties such as the Li and Shi family to those of generals and princesses from both the north and south, and even up to the Song dynasty. These extant epitaphs of Shatuo individuals choose to identify themselves as that of the Li or Shi family without mentioning any ties to the appellation of Shatuo. This phenomenon elucidates the extent and bounds of the Shatuo identity during this time. The Shatuo identity seems very much tied to the territory in which the Shatuo-Li family governed during the Tang. Although the Shatuo people grew into a poly-ethnopolitical federation with the Shatuo-Li family as the *kernel* group, after the fall of the Tang dynasty, there became no need to identify oneself with the appellation Shatuo which was tied to a Tang institution, the Shatuo prefecture in which the Li family governed to the north. Similar to how the Avars disappeared as argued by Walter Pohl, the appellation Shatuo became inconsequential to the Shatuo people after the founding of their own states.

Chapter 2. Upon the Creation of the Identity of the Shatuo Turks

Introduction

I have once heard from an aged man who said, “although Mingzong came from barbarian stock, his personality was genuinely humble and generously benevolent in love of people.” This is the reason why he is worthy of praise amongst the rulers of the Five Dynasties. Previously, he burned incense and raised his head up to “heaven” (*tian*) and prayed: “I am a foreigner (*fanren*). How can I rule all-under-heaven (*tianxia*)? The world has been turbulent for a long time and I beseech “heaven” to beget a sage soon.”¹⁶⁹

予聞長老為予言：「明宗雖出夷狄，而為人純質，寬仁愛人。」於五代之君，有足稱也。嘗夜焚香，仰天而祝曰：「臣本蕃人，豈足治天下！世亂久矣，願天早生聖人。」

An anonymous man once deliberated the significance of Li Siyuan (r. 926-933), posthumously Mingzong of Later Tang, with Ouyang Xiu, the compiler of *XWDS*. The man praises Mingzong for being man of humble character and a great ruler of the Five Dynasties during the chaotic Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, even in consideration of his “barbarian” (*yidi*) origins. Meanwhile, the subject of discussion himself seems to question his own legitimacy. In his soliloquy, Mingzong recognizes himself as a “foreigner” (*fanren*) or “barbarian,” and thus questions his legitimacy to rule over all-under-heaven, praying to “heaven” (*tian*) for a suitable sage-emperor. Interestingly, Mingzong’s doubt over his legitimacy due to his foreign background stands alone, as it is uncertain if the previous rulers of non-Han backgrounds doubted their legitimacy to rule because of their origins. During this period, the foreign origins of the rulers of the Five Dynasties were common knowledge and were accepted by the people and courts of the time. Yet ironically, recent Chinese historians have chosen to focus on the

¹⁶⁹ *XWDS* 6:66.

similarities between the Shatuo Turks and Han people, arguing for the Sinicization of the Shatuo Turks. Depicting Mingzong as a foreigner or barbarian appears only in Ouyang Xiu's *XWDS*. Therefore, we are presented with an interesting dichotomy: Li Siyuan and many other Shatuo people were seen by Song historians as "barbarians," but by modern scholars as thoroughly Sinicized.

In this chapter, I endeavor to liberate the Shatuo Turk from this long-established dichotomic portrayal of their identity. The first part of this chapter deals with the characteristics of the Shatuo Turkic people as seen by their Han counterparts. This examination will use ethnicity as a conceptual tool to gauge the traits of the Shatuo Turks. Rather than simply scrutinizing the ethnic traits of the Shatuo Turks, I focus on the discourse and application of these distinctions during the tenth century. I chose to look at the characteristics of "language," "arms and ways of fighting," "costume," and "hairstyles and body signs," which are adopted from criteria that Walter Pohl discussed as signs of ethnic identity.¹⁷⁰ I explore whether Song historians used these characteristics as "strategies of distinction." Amongst Walter Pohl's suggestions, I selectively chose to look at the traits of "physiognomy," as a modified version of "hairstyles and body signs." In addition, I added the traits "customs" and "occupation" as crucial criteria since these two factors were heavily discussed by medieval writers in their descriptions of the Shatuo Turks. Amongst these four categories, some should be considered as more absolute as they have been established through social interactions. While "languages," "customs," and "occupation" are attributed through the Shatuo Turks' interactions with Han people, "physiognomy" is a criterion observed by their Han counterparts. I argue that distinction based on these categories was not an objective or accurate manner in which to distinguish the "foreign"

¹⁷⁰ Walter Pohl, "Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity," 17-69.

or “barbaric” Shatuo Turks. Rather, these distinctions served as a method in which to distinguish *Self* from *Others* and reveal the Han ethnographers biased assumptions and conceptions of foreigners.

Specifically for “occupation,” I examine the stereotype that likens Shatuo Turks and many other nomadic groups as “barbarians”: their occupation of “raising sheep and horses” for a living. I evaluate whether this stereotype was applicable to the Shatuo Turkic ruling family of the Middle Kingdom. By analyzing the similar occupations held within the Tang dynasty and by differentiating social strata within the Shatuo Turkic ethnic group, I argue that the Shatuo Turkic ruling family should be considered as a separate distinct class of Shatuo Turks, which I name the “elite” Shatuo Turkic group.

In the second part of this chapter, I analyze how the “elite” Shatuo Turks constructed their identity. Through the analysis of succession events, I argue that the elite Shatuo group inadvertently created their own distinct identity of “genealogy over blood” through their unique usage of adoption and succession. I delineate historical instances of adoption into three different forms—bloodline succession adoption, mass adoption, and targeted adoption. Through their use of target adoption unlike the adoptions conducted in the previous dynasties, the Shatuo Li family secured their reputation as a military powerhouse, created their “genealogy over blood” identity, and cemented their legacy as rulers over the Middle Kingdom for over fifty years.

Languages

Designations for the language of non-Han people can be found in records of earlier periods including the Northern and Southern period when Xianbei 鮮卑 resided in North China. The

language used by the Xianbei rulers was called various names: “language of *hu* (*huyu* 胡語),” “language of north” (*beiyu* 北語), “words of north” (*beiyang* 北言), or more specifically “language of Xianbei” (*Xianbeiyu* 鮮卑語). Many sources and studies proved that the “language of Xianbei” was commonly used during the Northern Wei dynasty, especially before Emperor Xiaowen’s 孝文帝 (r. 471-499) reformation in 495. However, during the following Tang dynasty, it is unclear if this foreign language was used in court for instances other than communicating with neighboring states such as the Tujue or the Uyghurs. There were cases of royal family member’s using Turkic language, in instances not pertaining to the official business of the court.¹⁷¹

It is difficult to conclude with any certainty which specific “language(s)” the Shatuo Turks used. However, through the several records including *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ*, it is clear that the Shatuo Turkic people used a different language from their Han counterparts, mostly referred to as the “language of *hu*” (*huyu*) or “language of *fan*” (*fanyu*). The earliest instance of a distinct language being used by the Shatuo Turks can be seen towards the end of the Tang dynasty in the Biography of Huang Chao 黃巢 in *XTS*. When Huang Chao (835-884), a formidable rebel, occupied Jingnan 荆南, the two Tang generals, Cao Quanzhen 曹全晷 and Liu Jurong 劉巨容, prepared their Shatuo calvary to release five-hundreds of Shatuo horses as bait. Huang Chao’s generals tried to take the horses, but as the horses understood “Shatuo language”

¹⁷¹ For instance, Tang Taizong’s first son, Li Chengqian 李承乾 (618-645) was known for his unique behaviors including practicing Turkic custom, speaking “Turkic language” (Tujue *yu* 突厥語), and wearing Turkic custom. Because of his unique behaviors he was eventually demoted as a commoner (*ZZTJ* 196:6189-197:6193; *XTS* 80:3564-3565). Another case appears during the reign of Zhongzong of Tang (r. 705-710). Wu Yanxiu 武延秀, who married a Turkic princess, was good at “Turkic language” 突厥語. He sang “Turkic songs” 突厥歌 and danced “*hu* whirl dance” (*huxuanwu* 胡旋舞) at Princess Anle’s 安樂公主 place (*JTS* 183:4733; *XTS* 206:5839).

沙陀語, when they were called from the Shatuo cavalry, they went back to the Tang side.¹⁷² This case clearly shows that Shatuo people not only had their own language, but also trained horses using their own language.

In early tenth century, there appears to be a rise in cases exhibiting the use of foreign language in court. Interestingly, one of the distinguishable characteristics of being *Others* was the capacity to speak the language of their ethnic origins. There are records of Kang Fu 康福, Commissioner of the Horse Pasturages of the Later Tang court, who considered himself Shatuo, using *fanyu*. He openly communicated with Li Siyuan, Mingzong of Later Tang, using the language of *Others*.

Since [Kang] Fu was good at several *fanyu*, when Mingzong had some spare time away from administrating the affairs of state, he called [Kang Fu] to the Rest Palace to discuss the gain and loss [of state affairs], which [Kang] Fu reported to him in *fanyu*. An Chonghui, who was Military Affairs Commissioner, abhorred [this] so he often warned him (Kang Fu) in person saying, “Kang Fu, as [you] presumptuously report to the emperor, [I will] cut your head off one day.” [After hearing this, Kang] Fu was afraid of [him].¹⁷³

福善諸蕃語，明宗視政之暇，每召入便殿，諮訪時之利病，福即以蕃語奏之。樞密使重誨惡焉，常面戒之曰：「康福但亂奏事，有日斬之！」福懼。

A record depicting the same scene can be seen in *XWDS* which refers to the foreign language as “language of *rong*” (*rongyu* 戎語) and *fanyu*, while *ZZTJ* records the foreign language as *huyu*.¹⁷⁴ While *ZZTJ* mentions that Kang Fu was good at *huyu*, *JWDS* records that he was good at “several languages of *fan*.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² *XTS* 225c:6455.

¹⁷³ *JWDS* 91:1200.

¹⁷⁴ *XWDS* 46:515; *ZZTJ* 276:9033.

¹⁷⁵ *JWDS* 91:1200; *ZZTJ* 276:9033.

This short anecdote not only shows that An Chonghui, who came from northern tribal background,¹⁷⁶ disliked Kang Fu's speaking *fanyu* with Mingzong when talking about the state of affairs,¹⁷⁷ but also demonstrates that Mingzong frequently used *fanyu*, showing that *fanyu* was not banned in court proceedings. Kang Fu's family had been loyal military officers of the Later Tang court so the presumption can be made that his family may have been using *fanyu* to converse with Later Tang rulers for generations. The commentator of *ZZTJ*, Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1302), annotated that An Chonghui disliked Kang Fu's use of *huyu* in discussing court affairs with Mingzong because court officials were unable to understand the subject of discussion. Hu Sanxing's annotation does not distinguish whether other officials did not understand the language or only An Chonghui himself could not understand it. Considering An Chonghui was a descendant of a northern chieftain, it is likely that An Chonghui was familiar with a kind of *fanyu*. However, in this case, it seems that Chonghui's *fanyu* was most likely different from the language that Mingzong and Kang Fu were conversing in.

Mingzong proficiency with *huyu* or *fanyu* can be seen earlier before the founding of Later Tang in an episode with the Khitans. Mingzong was a mere general defending Youzhou 幽州, a region where the city of Beijing is currently located, against the Khitans. Knowing that a full-scale engagement would end in failure due to the substantial number of Khitan cavalry, Mingzong chose to defend against the Khitan troops at a steep mountain pass. After finally encountering the Khitan cavalry, he warned them using *huyu*.¹⁷⁸ His intention of using *huyu* was

¹⁷⁶ *JWDS* mentions that his ancestors were the chieftains of the northern tribe (*JWDS* 66:873). *ZZTJ* directly refers to him as "foreigner" (*huren* 胡人). See *ZZTJ* 269:8805.

¹⁷⁷ According to *ZZTJ*, unlike *JWDS*'s version, it is clearly recorded that "An Chonghui abhorred this (Kang Fu's using *huyu*)" 安重誨惡之. (*ZZTJ* 276:9033).

¹⁷⁸ *ZZTJ* 270:8817-8818. [Li Siyuan, the future Minzong of Later Tang] told the Khitans in *huyu*, "Since you [the Khitans] invaded our territory without any reasons, Prince of Jin ordered me to take a million of

to convey to the Khitan military the foreseen consequences of battle. It is not clear whether the *huyu* used by Mingzong to converse with the Khitans was the same as the one he used when conversing with Kang Fu later during his reign. However, this case proves that he could competently interact with the Khitans using a foreign language.

Another example shows that Shatuo Turkic people communicated with the Khitans using a foreign language. In 947, when Taizong 太宗 (r. 927-947) of Liao entered Bianliang 汴梁, the capital city of Later Jin, after defeating the second Shatuo Turkic dynasty, a general of the Jin court welcome him using a foreign language.

As the Khitans entered Bianliang, the officials welcomed and met him at Red Hill 赤崗. The Khitan ruler mounted the high hill and stationed the horse, and he gave solace and instructions to the Han officials. As An Shuqian came out of the group and imitated “the state language,” the Khitan ruler said, “you are An Meizi, aren’t you? When you were in Xingzhou, you came from far away to offer your loyalty. [Now] I am here, so you will have a place to eat.” As An Shuqian bowed to express his thanks and receded, before long [Taizong] made him Military Commissioner of Zhenguo Circuit.¹⁷⁹

契丹入汴，百僚迎見于赤崗，契丹主登高崗駐馬而撫諭漢官，叔千出班效國語，契丹主曰：「爾是安沒字否？卿比在邢州日，遠輸誠款，我至此，汝管取一喫飯處。」叔千拜謝而退，俄授鎮國軍節度使。

The Later Jin general, An Shuqian 安叔千 (881-952), welcomed Taizong using Taizong’s native language to communicate with him. In response to his greetings, Taizong not only recognized An Shuqian’s nickname, which literally means “who does not know letters,” but also remembered their previous encounter in Xingzhou 邢州. Unlike *JDWS*’s reference to the language which An Shuqian used as “the state language” (*guoyu* 國語), *ZZTJ*’s version refers to it as *huyu*.¹⁸⁰

soldiers to defeat you in Xilou so that we exterminate your tribe!” 胡語謂契丹曰：「汝無故犯我疆場，晉王命我將百萬眾直抵西樓，滅汝種族！」

¹⁷⁹ *JWDS* 123:1622.

¹⁸⁰ *ZZTJ* 286:9327.

Furthermore, *XWDS* cited it as “words of *yi*” (*yiyan* 夷言).¹⁸¹ In general, the term “state language” is used to refer to the official language designated by the states in the official histories. For example, the *LS* compilers used *guoyu* to refer to the Khitan language.¹⁸² Likewise, in *History of Yuan* 元史, *guoyu* referred to the Mongol language used at the time.¹⁸³ In this case, the foreign language used by An Shuqian is referred to as *guoyu*. This could have simply been a mistake by Xue Juzheng, but there is another possibility that Xue Juzheng wanted to indicate that An Shuqian already became a Khitan subject. In this case, *guoyu* represents the Khitan language.

The foreign language used in this discussion between the Shatuo Turkic court official and the Khitan emperor is unclear. Considering An Shuqian’s family served the Shatuo dynasties, Later Tang and Later Jin, and belonged to the Shatuo Three Tribes 沙陀三部落, there is a high possibility that An Shuqian was well-acquainted with the foreign language used by the Shatuo Turks. The Shatuo Turks and the Khitans could have shared a common language or a language similar to one another, leading to an understanding between the individuals. The languages could have also been completely different from one another with the individuals having learned one another’s languages. However, these occurrences show two unavoidable realities of foreign language during this time. The use of non-Han language was quite common and the acceptance of non-Han language by the court is quite clear. And most importantly, the terms *huyu* and *fanyu* were not markers of distinction solely for the Shatuo Turks. *Huyu* and *fanyu* were used to refer to the language(s) of both the Shatuo Turks and the Khitans, and thus, they cannot be used as a

¹⁸¹ *XWDS* 48:551.

¹⁸² In *Liao shi* there are many cases of mentioning “*guoyu*” to refer to the Khitan language. For example, Khitan seasonal rituals were recorded under Yearly Miscellaneous Ritual 歲時雜儀 and many Khitan terminologies were transcribed. See *LS* 53:877-879.

¹⁸³ For example, “*guoyu*” appears when Mongol designations were transcribed. Yuan Wuzong’s 武宗 (1307-1311) Mongol designation in *guoyu* was Qulü 曲律, which is Külüg. See Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuan shi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 23:531.

method of distinction for the Shatuo Turks. Rather *huyu* and *fanyu* seem to have been a method in which to distinguish *Others* from the Han.

Physiognomy

Physiognomy was used as a common trait in which to distinguish the Shatuo Turks from Han people, namely their “deep eyes and high noses” (*shenmu gaobi* 深目高鼻).¹⁸⁴ Even though *JTS* and *JWDS* did not distinguish the Shatuo people as “barbarians” (*yidi*), this physiognomic distinction, historically used to distinguish barbarians, was applied to the Shatuo Turks. The use of “deep eyes” for ethnic distinction of peoples appears over a millennium prior in Chinese history. Take for example the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhaijing* 山海經). This geography book compiled in the fourth century BCE is ripe with mythology alongside distorted and nonsensical descriptions of different ethnic groups. Take for instance one group of people living in north belonging to the “State [of People] with Deep Eye” 深目國.¹⁸⁵ According to the description, these people only had “one hand and one eye” 一手一目. Next to this state are the “State [of People] without Intestines” 無腸國, the “State [of People] Grasping [their] Ears” 聶耳國, etc.¹⁸⁶ These farfetched descriptions of the people of these states must have been derived from the compilers’ biased perspectives, degrading people who lived outside of their state and

¹⁸⁴ About the Tang discourse of “deep eyes and high noses,” see Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, 83-107.

¹⁸⁵ Wu Renchen 吳任臣, *Shanhaijing guangzhu* 山海經廣注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2020), 8:355. Anna Birrell translated *shenmu* as “deepseteyes.” See Birrell, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 123.

¹⁸⁶ *Shanhaijing guangzhu*, 8:356.

world. A survey of these descriptions, such as using “deep eye(s)” as a way to distinguish a particular group of people, came more from imagination than objectivity.

Moreover, having “deep eye(s)” seems to have no association with one’s foreign background. Another early example of its use is recorded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue* (*Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋). Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (d. 484 BC), who later becomes a politician of Wu 吳, hired an assassin named Zhuan Zhu 專諸 (d. 515 BC) to kill King Liao of Wu. In *Yu Wue Chunqiu*, Zhuan Zhu is depicted as a someone who had a “high forehead looks like a club and deep eyes and tiger’s chest and bear’s back” 確顙而深目，虎膺而熊背。¹⁸⁷ Zhuan Zhu was a native from Tangyi 堂邑 in Wu, so “deep eyes” seems to have no correlation with his ethnicity and was rather used as a figure of speech to describe his uniqueness. The following parallel phrase which compares his chest and back to those of tiger and bear, respectively, also serves as an allusion to his braveness and suitability as an assassin. Another case can be seen in *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳), compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 in 18 CE. According to the biography of Zhong Lichun 鍾離春, who eventually became Principal Queen of King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (r. 319-301 BC), she was described to have been an ugly woman. She was depicted as having a “dented head,” “deep eyes,” “tall and grandiose,” “big joints,” “upturned nose,” “protuberant throat,” “chubby nape,” “wispy hair,” “folded waist,” “protruded chest,” “[dark] skin like lacquer” 臼頭，深目，長壯，大節，印鼻，結喉，肥項，少髮，折腰，出胸，皮膚若漆。¹⁸⁸ Zhong Lichun was from a village called

¹⁸⁷ Zhao Ye 趙曄, *Wu Yue Chunqiu jixiao huikao* 吳越春秋輯校彙考, edited by Zhou Shengchun 周生春 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), 19.

¹⁸⁸ Liu Xiang 劉向, *Lienü zhuan buzhu* 列女傳補注, annotated by Wang Zhaoyuan 王照圓 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue, 2012), 260.

Wuyan 無鹽 in Qi.¹⁸⁹ Similar to the case of Zhuan Zhu, this use of “deep eyes” seems to be independent of ethnicity and used as a trait assigned to those deemed ugly.

The correlation between “deep eyes” and groups of certain peoples was first created during the early medieval period after encounters with the “Five Barbarians” (*wuhu*). Along with “deep eyes,” *nose* shape and *hair* type were added to designate the “western barbarians” (*xirong* 西戎) and “Four Barbarians” (*siyi*). According to *History of Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書), people of the State of Dayuan 大宛國, which was located in Ferghana valley in Central Asia, had “deep eyes and luxuriant beards” 深目多鬚.¹⁹⁰ In *History of the Northern Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書), the people living in Gaochang 高昌, along with the states geographically situated to the west of it, had “deep eyes and high noses.”¹⁹¹ Moreover, *Wei shu* elucidates that “all of the people in [Samarkand] had deep eyes, high noses, and luxuriant beards” 人皆深目、高鼻、多髯.¹⁹² These group of peoples were categorized as “western barbarians” (*xirong*) in *Comprehensive Institutions* (*Tong dian* 通典) which was compiled during the Tang dynasty.¹⁹³

However, “deep eyes and high noses” was not only used to refer to western peoples. In *History of Sui* (*Sui shu* 隋書), the people of Lâm Ấp (Ch. *Linyi* 林邑), a state under the category of the “southern barbarians” (*nanman* 南蠻), were known to have “deep eyes and high noses.”¹⁹⁴ A slightly different form of nose can also be seen for a different group of peoples. The case of “deep eyes and long nose” (*shenmu changbi* 深目長鼻) appears to denote a group of eastern

¹⁸⁹ Wuyan 無鹽 belongs to where the current Dongping County 東平縣 in Shandong Province 山東省 is.

¹⁹⁰ *Jin shu* 97:2543.

¹⁹¹ *Wei shu* 102:2263; *Zhou shu* 50:917.

¹⁹² *Wei shu* 102:2281.

¹⁹³ *Tong dian* 192:5225; 193:5255.

¹⁹⁴ *Sui shu* 82:1832. Also seen in *Tong dian* 188:5091; *BS* 95:3158.

people. The people in the State of Ryūkyū (Ch. Liuqiu *guo* 流求國) had “deep eyes and long noses” and belonged to *hu* people, broadly western or northern “barbarian” people, or specifically Iranian people.¹⁹⁵ There is a lack of evidence that the Ryūkyū people were connected to the *hu* people. It is quite possible that the correlation was based on ignorance.

Along with “deep eyes and high noses,” “high noses and luxuriant hair” has been used to clearly differentiate *hu* and Jie 羯 immigrants from Han people. In *Jin shu*, Ran Min 冉閔 (r. 350-352), who was a ruler of the short-lived Ran Wei 冉魏 (350-352), ordered the genocide of the ethnic Jie people, one of the “Five Barbarians,” to avenge the Shi family. His father was adopted into the ruling Shi 石 family whose background was Jie and Ran Min himself was promised the throne, but was eventually betrayed. When the genocide started, Ran Min’s soldiers massacred *hu* and Jie people regardless of their wealth, gender, and age.¹⁹⁶ At the time, half of the massacred people were mistakenly killed due to their distinguishable appearance, “high noses and/or luxuriant beard” 高鼻多鬚. The two characteristics were the significant criteria in which to distinguish foreigners from the Han people. In other words, half of the people were killed by mistake based on the stereotypical constructed image of *hu* and Jie. This could mean that either immigrants other than Jie people or Han people were also killed due to their appearance. Either way, this appearance does not seem to be a definitive marker of a specific ethnic group of people.

During Tang, the phrase “deep eyes and high noses” became a stereotype of the *hu* people. An anecdote in *Records of the Court and the Commonality* (*Chaoye qianzai* 朝野僉載)

¹⁹⁵ *Sui shu* 81:1824; *BS* 94:3133; *Tong dian* 186:5026.

¹⁹⁶ *Jin shu* 107:2792; *ZZTJ* 98:3100.

clearly shows this phrase became inseparable from the image of the *hu* people starting from the early half of Tang.

Song Cha from Guangping married a daughter of You Chang from the same commandery. [Song] Cha's ancestors were *hu*, but the three generations of his family have belonged to Han. Unexpectedly, [his wife] gave a birth to a baby who had deep eyes and high nose. [Song] Cha suspected that the baby was not his offspring, so [he] was about to kill the baby. Shortly after [his son's birth], [his] madder-colored mare gave birth to one white colt. [Song] Cha realized and said: "My family used to have a white horse. It has been already twenty-five years since the line has been severed, yet it is reborn now. My great-grandfather was *hu* in his appearance. Now this boy revived his ancestor." [Song Cha] finally raised the boy. When someone says, "A white horse saved a *hu* boy," this is what they refer to.¹⁹⁷

廣平宋察娶同郡游昌女。察先代胡人也，歸漢三世矣。忽生一子，深目而高鼻，疑其非嗣，將不舉。須臾赤草馬生一白駒，察悟曰：「我家先有白馬，種絕已二十五年，今又復生。吾曾祖貌胡，今此子復其先也。」遂養之。故曰「白馬活胡兒」，此其謂也。

Considering that *Chaoye qianzai* includes anecdotes from the seventh century, this story shows that the physiognomic image of "deep eyes with high noses" was already attributed to *hu* people during early Tang dynasty when the inclusion policy was enforced. Since his great-grandfather was *hu*, Song Cha's family must have migrated to China during the Sui or early Tang dynasty. Since he has an ethnic Han surname, Song, it is unlikely that anyone would have noticed that Song Cha's direct ancestors used to be *hu*. It is uncertain if Song Cha first chose to abandon the baby because of his wife's possible adultery or his personal unwillingness to reveal his *hu* ancestry, but it is clear that the exotic-looking baby must have embarrassed him. In addition, the story emphasizes that *hu* people's trait of "deep eyes and high noses" could be passed down and manifested after a few generations. Although Song Cha was suspicious of the *hu*-looking baby,

¹⁹⁷ Zhang Zhuo 張鷟, *Chaoye qianzai* 朝野僉載 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 5:121. Translations from Abramson with some modifications. See Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, 102.

the colt story successfully delivers the idea that *hu* identity itself can be revived after a few generations. The birth of his *hu*-looking child provides a way in which he could reclaim or confirm his *hu* ancestry.

It is difficult to ascertain if the Shatuo people were distinguished as “barbarians” or “foreigners” based on their appearance during the Tang dynasty. However, there is a case recorded in *XTS*, *JWDS*, and *XWDS* that exemplifies how contemporaries defined the ethnicity of the Shatuo Turks. During the reign of Emperor Zhaozong (r. 888-904) of Tang, General Shi Shucong 氏叔琮 (d. 904) who worked for Zhu Wen, the future emperor of Later Liang, hatched a scheme to capture Li Keyong, Prince of Jin 晉王, who was a Shatuo general and Zhu Wen’s most prominent adversary at the time. Shi Shucong ordered two men with “deep eyes and *hu* beards” 深目而胡鬚 to herd horses beside a hill in Jiangzhou 絳州. This planned ambush to provoke Li Keyong’s military proved to be successful. Li Keyong’s troops thought the two men were “Jin soldiers” 晉兵 or their own soldiers and took them within their ranks. Accordingly, these two men instead captured two of Li Keyong’s troops as captives and returned to General Shi Shucong.¹⁹⁸ The “Jin soldiers” in this episode refer to the Shatuo Turkic soldiers. Towards the end of the Tang dynasty, the Shatuo Turkic people were located in Li Keyong’s Jin fiefdom, given to him by Emperor Zhaozong. While *XDWS* describes the appearances of the two men as having “deep eyes and *hu* beards,” *XTS* and *JWDS* provide more connections between the two traits and Shatuo. *XTS* and *JWDS* respectively record that Shi Shucong selected two people “who were a kind of Shatuo” 類沙陀者 or “whose appearance were like Shatuo” 貌如沙陀者. It clearly shows that having “deep eyes and *hu* beards” was attributed to the Shatuo Turks.

¹⁹⁸ *XTS* 223b:6362; *JWDS* 19:256; *XWDS* 43:467.

On the other hand, *JWDS* used the more detailed expression of “deep eyes and dragon beard” 深目虬鬚 that depicted the Shatuo Turks in a more positive light with the addition of “dragon beard.” The Daoist scholar Du Guangting’s 杜光庭 (850-933) famous short novel, “Tale of the Dragon-bearded Guest” (*Qiuranke zhuan* 虬髯客傳), had a description of this dragon beard. One of the protagonists, a guest with a red curly beard-like dragon, supports Li Jing 李靖, the future Tang general, to aid Li Shimin 李世民 (later Taizong of Tang, r. 626-649) in establishing the Tang dynasty. Thanks to the support from this guest, Li Jing was able to help Taizong defeat the Sui dynasty. At the end of the story, a man from “southern *man*” 南蠻 states that the guest took over the State of Puyō 扶餘國.¹⁹⁹ It is unclear where the guest originally came from, but he is depicted as a righteous man who has foresight. Duan Chengshi’s 段成式 (800-863) *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* (*Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎) includes a short anecdote of Taizong of Tang. According to the anecdote, Taizong who had “dragon beard” 虬鬚 playfully used his beard to draw a bow.²⁰⁰ Having “dragon beard” was not only applied exclusively to the “barbarians” or “foreigners” but also used to describe uniqueness or auspiciousness.

¹⁹⁹ See Du Guangting 杜光庭, *Qiuranke zhuan* 虬髯客傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991). Since Puyō already disappeared in the fifth century in the Korean peninsula, it seems that the author, Du Guangting, fictionally used the name of the state for the story.

²⁰⁰ Duan Chengshi 段成式, *Youyang zazu jiaojian* 酉陽雜俎校箋, ed. Xu Yimin 許逸民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2015), 2.



Figure 2: Portrait of Zhuangzong in the National Palace Museum in Taipei

An existing portrait preserved in National Palace Museum in Taipei shows how people in later periods portrayed a Shatuo Turkic figure, specifically Zhuangzong (r. 908-923) of Later

Tang in this portrait.²⁰¹ This portrait of Zhuangzong, presumptively painted during the Qing dynasty, does not seem to show “deep eyes” or a “high nose,” but rather depicts a “luxuriant/dragon beard.” His portrait illustrates features generally attributed to Han nobles: long-shallow eyes, nose not too high or low, and a flattish but square jawline. It also portrays his prowess and determination as a general-like emperor through a curly “luxuriant beard” along with a bulky, yet stout figure. The accuracy of this portrait of Zhuangzong is unknown, but considering the portrait did not reflect practical factors such as possible war wounds on the face or hand,²⁰² the portrait was attractively manipulated. This polished version was probably created to depict Zhuangzong as a “Chinese” ruler.²⁰³ Since there is no explicit physiognomic description about the Shatuo rulers, it is difficult to conclude whether they had such features. However, it was clear that “deep eyes,” “high noses,” and/or “luxuriant beard” were used as ethnic markers to distinguish *hu* or Shatuo people during this period. In terms of “physiognomy,” there was no absolute physical trait inherent to the Shatuo Turkic people.

Customs

A unique trait of the Shatuo Turks was their practicing of rituals to their own “heavenly god” (*tianshen* 天神) or “Turkic god” (Tujue *shen*). The first record of a specific “Turkic god” can be

²⁰¹ Here, I used the image from Wikipedia. “Emperor Zhuangzong of the Later Tang dynasty,” Wikipedia, Accessed July 5, 2022.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_Cunxu#/media/File:Zhuangzong_of_Later_Tang.jpg. For a printed version, see Guoli Gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物館 [National Palace Museum, Taipei]. *Gugong tuxiang xuancui* 故宮圖像選萃. (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1971), 16.

²⁰² Davis mentioned that his skin was depicted without scars despite his long-time commitment in battles. See Davis, *Fire and Ice: Li Cunxu and the Founding of the Later Tang*, 14-15.

²⁰³ In this case, it is apparent that there are several different versions of portraits. For example, there are different versions of the portraits of the founder of Ming, the Hongwu Emperor.

seen during the Tang dynasty. According to the *Deeds of An Lushan* (*An Lushan shiji* 安祿山事蹟), during the reign of Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713-756) of Tang, many people played the music of the “Turkic god” due to the influence of An Lushan.²⁰⁴ In the seventh month of 924, the first Shatuo Turkic emperor, Zhaungzong of Later Tang, went to “Thunder Mountain” 雷山 to offer a sacrifice to the “heavenly god.” The commentator of *XWDS*, Xu Wudang 徐無黨, simply annotated that it was a “barbarian’s affair” 夷狄之事.²⁰⁵ Rituals to the Turkic god appear later during the reign of Li Siyuan, Mingzong of Later Tang.²⁰⁶ In the sixth month of 927, Mingzong went to “Slope of White Marshal” 白司馬坡 to conduct rituals for the “Turkic god.” *JWDS* records that it was the “ritual of northern custom” 北俗之禮, while the commentator of *XWDS* again annotated that it was a “barbarian’s affair.”²⁰⁷ In the eleventh month of the same year, Mingzong went to the outskirts to once again conduct rituals for the “foreign god” (*fanshen*).²⁰⁸ *XWDS* did not explain the identity of the “foreign god,” but alluded that the god was the same as the “Turkic god” whom Mingzong conducted rituals for in the sixth month. Even though a specific list of offerings to their god was not recorded, a clue can be found in the Monograph of Tujue in *Sui shu*. “In the fifth month, [the Tujue people] slaughtered many sheep and horses to make offerings to heaven.” 五月中，多殺羊馬以祭天。²⁰⁹ *Sui shu* continues that the custom was generally similar to that of the Xiongnu. Mingzong’s ritual in the sixth month of 927 is most likely the same as the traditional rituals of the Tujue. The Orkhon Inscriptions erected by the

²⁰⁴ *An Lushan shiji*, 104.

²⁰⁵ *XWDS* 5:47.

²⁰⁶ On Mingzong’s old practices, see Okazaki Seirō 岡崎精郎, “Kōtō Meisō to kyūshū (jō)” 後唐の明宗と舊習(上), *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 9, no. 4 (1945): 244-256; “Kōtō Meisō to kyūshū (ge)” 後唐の明宗と舊習(下), *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 10, no. 2 (1948): 93-104.

²⁰⁷ *JWDS* 38:525; *XWDS* 6:58.

²⁰⁸ *JWDS* 38:530.

²⁰⁹ *Sui shu* 84:1864.

Turks in the eighth century in Orkhon Valley in Mongolia clearly shows the Turks' connection with heaven, *tengri*. The inscription explains that heaven made their rule possible.²¹⁰

Related to the *tengri* belief, another custom conducted during the Shatuo dynasty shows their strong nomadic roots: to base crucial decisions off divination. The custom of making an important decision based on one's fortune can be found in a case of Xianbei people. Known as one of "Five Barbarians" (*wuhu*), a branch of Xianbei established the Northern Wei dynasty (386–535). An old practice of the Xianbei was to select empresses through "the casting of a golden statue in person" 手鑄金人. Once a candidate succeeds in casting a golden statue, she was installed as empress.²¹¹ Lady Murong 慕容氏 became empress of Emperor Daowu 道武帝 (r. 398-409) after she succeeded in making a statue, while another wife neé Liu 劉氏 was not installed as empress because she failed to cast a statue. Also, Lady Yao 姚氏 never became empress of Emperor Mingyuan 明元帝 (r. 409-423) while she was alive due to her incapability of casting a golden statue even though she was the emperor's favorite. The tradition is not specifically mentioned in the history of Xianbei, however, an earlier record provides a connection between casting a statue and practicing rituals to heaven.²¹² The Treatise on Geography 地理志 of *Jin shu* records that it was in Liangzhou, the current Gansu province 涼州, where "Xiongnu originally casted a golden statue to worship heaven" 本匈奴鑄金人祭天.²¹³ It clearly explains the two aspects of Xiongnu customs as "to cast a golden statue" and "to worship heaven." Although connections between Xiongnu's and Xianbei's customs have not yet been

²¹⁰ For the Orkhon inscription translation, see E. Denison Ross and Vilhelm Thomsen, "The Orkhon Inscriptions: Being a Translation of Professor Vilhelm Thomsen's Final Danish Rendering," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 5.4 (1930): 861-876.

²¹¹ *Wei shu* 13:321; *Bei shi* 13:486.

²¹² *Wei shu* 13:325; *Bei shi* 13:492-493.

²¹³ *Jin shu* 14:432.

found, there is a high possibility that identical traditions were practiced by Xianbei people and this fortune-based selection was related to the worshipping of “heaven.”

During late Northern Wei when a general, Erzhu Rong 爾朱榮 (493-530), took over the Northern Wei court, another example of statue-casting appears. Because he had not yet decided whom he would install as a puppet emperor, Erzhu casted bronze statues of the offspring of the imperial family. Once a statue of a member was successfully made, the member was installed as emperor.²¹⁴ Being of Xiongnu descent himself, Erzhu Rong likely chose to rely on Xiongnu/Xianbei tradition at this crucial moment.

A similar tradition appears during the Shatuo court. In both the Biographies of Lu Wenji 盧文紀 (876-951) and Yao Yi 姚顗 (866-940), there are descriptions of how they became chancellors. During the reign of Li Congke 李從珂 (r. 934-937), Modi 末帝 of Later Tang, he wanted to select chancellors amongst ten candidates. He put papers with their names inscribed into a crystal bottle and “burned incense” to receive a response from “heaven” (*tian*). In the morning Modi withdrew Lu Wenji’s name first followed by Yao Yi’s name. As a result, Modi elevated Lu Wenji and Yao Yi to the positions of Deputy Head of the Palace Secretariat 中書侍郎 and chancellor.²¹⁵ This selection process was truly based on one’s fortune rather than merit. This system was not always practiced but was used during crucial junctures for critical decision-making.

In both the cases of the Xianbei and Shatuo, there is not a single objecting opinion seen in the court with regards to the selection of high officials through divination. In addition to *XWDS*,

²¹⁴ Yuan Ziyou 元子攸 was selected to become Emperor Xiaozhuang 孝莊帝 (r. 528-530) of Northern Wei through this process (*Wei shu* 74:1647; *Bei shi* 48:1753).

²¹⁵ *JWDS* 127:1667.

Wang Yucheng's 王禹偁 *Lost Stories of the Five Dynasties* 五代史闕文 specifies Mingzong's nightly practice of "burning incense" and raising his head to "heaven" (*tian*).²¹⁶ Mingzong's routine was presumably to pay homage to the Turkic god to whom he gave rituals to after his rise to emperor. Generally, the consideration of unique customs can become a critical marker in differentiating groups of peoples. However, this custom attributed to the Shatuo was practiced by Turkic groups and was instead a method in which to generalize the Shatuo cultural identity to that of *Others*, separate from that of the Han people.

Occupation: The Myth of Raising Sheep and Horses

The stereotype of the Shatuo Turks' occupation pertaining to "raising sheep and horses" can be found from even before the fall of the Tang dynasty. During the reign of Zhaozong of Tang, in General Shi Shucong's scheme to capture Li Keyong which was mentioned earlier, he not only hired two people with "deep eyes and high noses," but also let them "raise sheep and horses." Along with the portrayal of their appearance, Shatuo Turk's occupation of herding was crucial in terms of distinguishing the Shatuo Turks. Since people who looked like Shatuo were "herding horses" which Shatuo Turkic people were stereotypically known for practicing, even Li Keyong's own troops did not fathom their double-agent nature. However, although herding has an undeniable historic significance and connection to people with nomadic backgrounds, the Song historians' generalization that the occupation of herding was a nomadic or Shatuo Turkic practice is inaccurate for two reasons: (1) the occupation of herding was prevalent amongst even

²¹⁶ *JWDS* 44:610; *XWDS* 6:66.

Han people and played a significant role in the functioning of previous Chinese dynasties, and (2) the Shatuo Turks were at the time also recognized for their occupation as military personnel.

Firstly, herding was not an occupation limited to nomadic and Shatuo Turkic people. The importance horse-grooming held to previous dynasties first becomes apparent during the Northern Dynasties period when practice of raising horses was systemized. The earliest record of the creation of a large-scale horse farm was when the Northern Wei established a ranch in the Henei 河內 region. According to *Wei shu*, Emperor Taiwu 太武帝 (r. 423-452) acquired City of Tongwan 統萬城, the capital city of Xia 夏, one of the Sixteen Kingdoms, and established a ranch in the Hexi region. Since then, Emperor Xiaowen expanded the pasturage to include the east side of the Henei region.²¹⁷ A thousand *li* span north and south of the Yellow River was blocked to develop the ranch into a “horse pasturage” 馬場 at the time of *Wei shu*’s compilation.²¹⁸ Considering *Wei shu* was compiled around 554, the ranch had been maintained for approximately a century.

Later, during the Tang dynasty, Taiyuan, which prospered as the third capital and foundation of the Tang dynasty, was also known for the coexistence of farmlands and grasslands. Even before the Shatuo Turks relocated to Taiyuan, the place was recognized for its abundance of sheep and horses. In the first year of Emperor Dezong’s 德宗 (r. 779-805) reign, as the Uyghurs planned to invade Tang, a statement by Dunmohe 頓莫賀, the future Uyghur’s Wuyi Chenggong Qaghan 武義成功可汗 (literally “Martial Justice Victorious” Qaghan), illustrates the magnitude of sheep and horse farming in Taiyuan.

²¹⁷ ZZTJ 139:4369.

²¹⁸ *Wei Shu* 44:1000.

“Tang, it is the great state which never betray us. Last year when we invaded Taiyuan and acquired tens of thousands of sheep and horses which could be considered a great victory. However, because of the road was long we ran out of food, so on the return way, there were a lot of soldiers who had to travel on foot. Now, [what if] the whole state goes deep in to [Tang], we do not achieve victory, how can we come back comfortably!”²¹⁹

「唐，大國也，無負於我，吾前年侵太原，獲羊馬數萬，可謂大捷，而道遠糧乏，比歸，士卒多徒行者。今舉國深入，萬一不捷，將安歸乎！」

In the above passage, Dunmohe, the cousin of Uyghur’s Dengli Qaghan 登里可汗 (“Tengri” Qaghan), disagreed with Tengri Qaghan’s plan to invade Tang territory. In his appeal, Dunmohe boasts about how the Uyghurs plundered tens of thousands of sheep and horses from Taiyuan but consumed the captured livestock on their way back to their capital, Ordu-Baliq, the previous year (779). Strikingly, this passage puts into perspective the extent to which the residents of Taiyuan, home to a considerable portion of households, practiced large-scale ranching.

Moreover, raising horses was crucial for the militaries of previous dynasties. Take for instance Wu Shaoyang 吳少陽 (d. 814), a commissioner who resided in the Zhangyi Circuit 彰義軍 during the Tang dynasty. During his residency in Caizhou 蔡州, he secretly gathered defectors to “herd and raise horses and mules” 牧養馬騾 to “strengthen his military” 實其軍.²²⁰ According to *JWDS*, Wu Shaoyang’s local government resided in a territory consisting of many grand prairies and big marshes. Using this location to his advantage, he “acquired and raised horses and livestock” 得豢馬畜.²²¹ When considering Wu Shaoyang’s ethnicity, “raising horses” cannot be solely restricted as the occupation of non-Han peoples.

²¹⁹ *JTS* 195:5208; *XTS* 217a:6121; *ZZTJ* 226:7282.

²²⁰ *ZZTJ* 239:7705.

²²¹ *JWDS* 145:3947.

Secondly, the Shatuo Turks' fame as soldiers and military administrators adds another aspect to the monotonic stereotype of their occupation as sheep and horse herders. Although the Shatuo Turks continued their lifestyle as herders and hunters when they first migrated to the Tang territory, after they resettled in Hedong in the early 800s, their occupations were not limited to managing livestock.²²² By the late ninth century, the Shatuo Turks had developed into one of the strongest military groups in the Tang dynasty. With the Shatuo Turks being recognized as effective soldiers and commanding military administrators within the Tang court, this metaphor of "raising sheep and horses" does and did not fully reflect the occupations of the Shatuo Turks nor accurately portray the Shatuo Turks of the tenth century within the context of Sino-Inner Asian society.

Take for example of Emperor Zhuangzong of Later Tang. While Song historiography generalizes Zhuangzong's and his family's occupation as herders, they were a prominent military family. In the search to correctly portray Zhuangzong and his family, the stone inscription or epitaph of Zhuangzong's father, Li Keyong, becomes a valuable *emic* source to ascertain the family's occupation. The first part of the inscription lists not only the offices Li Keyong held but the offices that all his direct ancestors received under the Tang court. Among the various offices listed, his grandfather, Zhiyi, was once appointed as Garrison Commissioner of Horses and Troops 府兵馬使 by Dezong of Tang. Garrison Commissioner of Horses and Troops and Commissioner of Horses and Troops 兵馬使 should not be understood as offices in charge of managing horses, but rather as designations of military offices in the frontiers. This epitaph elucidates three generations of Zhuangzong's family's military appointments.

²²² Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers*, 141.

Of course, many Shatuo Turks still continued their original occupation as sheep and horse herders during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. As seen in the Biography of An Chongrong 安重榮 (d. 942), a general of the Later Jin court, he is seen reporting to Shi Jingtang, Gaozu of Later Jin (r. 936-942), that several tribal groups defected to Later Jin in 941.

“I report that previously Cooked Tu[yu]hun Military Governor, Bai Chengfu, and Helian Gongde etc. each leading thirty thousand tribal people and tents from Yingzhou fled and defected to the beneficial influence of the sovereign. Continuously, [not only] three tribes (*buluo*) of Raw Tuyuhun, Mixed Qibi and two Tujue, [but also] south and north of Shatuo, Anqing Nine Offices etc., their chieftain respectively lead their groups (*buzu*), old and young, oxen and sheep, wagons and tents, armors and horses, and came through seven or eight roads to flee and defect yearning for beneficial influence, which [already] reached Wutai or have been arrived in the frontier of the prefecture to lodge. They repeatedly went through hardship, saying that they have been being harmed by the Khitans, who were randomly capturing people and looting sheep and horses...”²²³

臣昨據熟吐渾節度使白承福、赫連公德等，各領本族三萬餘帳，自應州地界奔歸王化。續準生吐渾并渾莧苾兩突厥三部落，南北將沙陀、安慶、九府等，各領部族老小，并牛羊、車帳、甲馬，七八路慕化歸奔，俱至五臺及當府地界已來安泊。累據告勞，具說被契丹殘害，平取生口，率略羊馬...

An Chongrong explained to Shi Jingtang that the three tribal groups Tuyuhun, Mixed Qibi, and Two Turks; the Shatuo; and the Anqing Nine Offices defected to him. Both *JWDS* and *XWDS* record that the true intention of An Chongrong's report was to write a message to Shi Jingtang to admonish the Later Jin court's humiliating relationship with Liao, the Khitan state to the north.²²⁴ According to this report, old and young peoples of Shatuo brought oxen and sheep, wagons and tents, and arms and horses to An Chongrong to avoid the occupation of their prior territory by the Khitans.

²²³ *JWDS* 98:1302-3; *XWDS* 51:584; *ZZTJ* 282:9222.

²²⁴ At the moment, the Later Jin court paid tribute to the Khitans. *JWDS* 98:1302-3; *XWDS* 51:584.

On a basic level, this passage proves that the Shatuo groups that resided in Hedong still raised livestock for a living. Yet, when considering that Shi Jingtang, the recipient of this report, was also a Shatuo Turk, this passage not only reveals a duality in occupations held by the Shatuo Turks, but also a duality in the social statuses of Shatuo Turks. The Shatuo Turks who held military positions were of the ruling families of the Shatuo Turkic dynasties and enjoyed a lifestyle higher up on the social stratum than the Shatuo Turks who held occupations as herders. Therefore, the Shatuo Turks of the ruling families with military occupations should be considered as a separate class from the other Shatuo Turks, or specifically “elite.” The Song historians’ characterization of the Shatuo Turkic “elite” as “barbarians” who “herd sheep and horses” is misplaced considering their actual occupation.

However, interestingly, in the Biography of Kang Fu in *JWDS*, there is a record of Zhuangzong himself allegedly nonchalantly mentioning his background as a herder.

When Zhuangzong succeeded the throne, he previously told his courtiers that, “I am originally a foreigner (*fanren*) who [raised] sheep and horses for a living. That Kang Fu who has an appearance of virtue and generosity should manage goods, so I can let him be responsible for the horse pasturages.” For this reason, [Kang Fu] was appointed as Commissioner of the Horse Pasturages, which resulted in the bountiful reproduction [of horses].²²⁵

莊宗嗣位，嘗謂左右曰：「我本蕃人，以羊馬為活業。彼康福者，體貌豐厚，宜領財貨，可令總轄馬牧。」由是署為馬坊使，大有蕃息。

XWDS also recounts a similar record with the slight discrepancy. Zhuangzong asserted that rather than his previous occupation being one of that of a herder, his family raised “sheep and horses” for a living.²²⁶ The purpose of revealing his occupation as a herder was related to the

²²⁵ *JWDS* 91:1200.

²²⁶ A similar record is seen in *XWDS* (*XWDS* 46:514). *XWDS*’s version reads, “my family [raised] sheep and horses for living. [Kang] Fu’s appearance is like a kind of *huren* which make him look abundant and

appointment of Kang Fu as Commissioner of the Horse Pasturages. Both *JWDS* and *XWDS* record Zhuangzong's mentioning of his supposed previous occupation while *ZZTJ* only points out that Kang Fu received the position.²²⁷

It is not certain if Zhuangzong actually mentioned "raising sheep and horses." Zhuangzong's mentioning of his previous herding occupation could have been fabricated by the Song historians in order to tie the Shatuo Turkic "elite" to their stereotype of nomadic "barbarians." There is also the possibility that Zhuangzong utilized his Shatuo Turkic heritage and conveniently invoked his heritage to tout his familiarity with herding to install Kang Fu as commissioner. While clearly not a herder, Zhuangzong could have used his Shatuo Turkic identity to attain his ends. Regardless of the possibilities, Zhuangzong's occupation was clearly not one of a herder and this case is exceptional. When considering the records of the Shatuo Turkic *emic* source *JTS*, although it is limited to the early history of the Shatuo Turks, it never records the Shatuo Turks' occupation as herders, but consistently only refers to their backgrounds as warriors.

It is apparent that the group of Shatuo Turks were divided in a social hierarchy: the lower stratum of the group resided in the Hedong region carrying on their original occupation as herders while the "elite" held occupations in the military. Particularly due to Li Guochang's prominent military capabilities, the Shatuo-Li family constituted the upper stratum of the social hierarchy. The Shatuo Turks were even considered to be "noble stock" (*guizhong*) by the other "barbarians" (*yidi*) since Li Keyong's father was bestowed Tang imperial surname, Li.²²⁸

generous. *Hu* is suitable for undertake sheep and horses." 吾家以羊馬為生，福狀貌類胡人而豐厚，胡宜羊馬。

²²⁷ *ZZTJ* 274:8967.

²²⁸ *XWDS* 4:40.

However, besides their military occupation, what characteristics truly define the identity of this “elite” Shatuo Turkic group?

Elite Shatuo Identity without Blood

The Righteous Sons

In the preface of the Biography of Righteous Sons 義兒傳 in *XWDS*, Ouyang Xiu starts by detailing two preconditions necessary for a foster father-son relationship and subsequently disparages Li Keyong and his use of adoption.

“Alas! Once the Way is decayed and the ethics of humanity are destroyed, the norms for regulating family relations can be subverted, culminating in strife among kinsmen as persons of different blood bond, like father and son. During the fifty years between Kaifeng and Xiande reigns, all-under-heaven (*tianxia*) of Five Dynasties was practically [ruled by] eight surnames, [but] three surnames were from adoption. The greatest adoptees obtained *tianxia*, the lesser ones acquired military accomplishments and ranked among the states’ commanders or ministers. Were these not [people who] exploited the deficiencies of the time, coalesced on account of profits, and helped one another? The Later Tang rulers, who called themselves Shatuo, rose from Daibei, had assembled audacious and martial warriors of the period, often raising them as sons to constitute the “Army of Righteous Sons.” Many contributed to its success at winning *tianxia*, yet the Tang unraveled at their hands as well. The sons adopted by Taizu were numerous, nine of whom can be chronicled. One was Mingzong, and the others were Sizhao, Siben, Si’en, Cunxin, Cunxiao, Cunjin, Cunzhang, and Cunxian. [For this reason,] I wrote [this] Biography of Righteous Sons.”²²⁹

嗚呼！世道衰，人倫壞，而親疏之理反其常，干戈起於骨肉，異類合為父子。開平、顯德五十年間，天下五代而實八姓，其三出於丐養。蓋其大者取天下，其次立功名、位將相，豈非因時之隙，以利合而相資者邪！唐自號沙陀，起代北，其所與俱皆一時雄傑武之士，往往養以為兒，號「義兒軍」。至其有天下，多用以成功業，及其亡也亦由焉。太祖養子多矣，其可紀者九人，其一是為明宗，其次曰嗣昭、嗣本、嗣恩、存信、存孝、存進、存璋、存賢。作義兒傳。

²²⁹ *XWDS* 36:385. Translations from Davis with some modifications. See Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 296.

This biography is quite significant because before *XWDS*, there was no record or publication exclusively specifying adoption practices during this period. Ouyang Xiu's reason for dedicating one whole fascicle to adoption was simple; from Ouyang Xiu's perspective, the foster father-son relationship was unnatural and deserved scrutiny. Ouyang Xiu believed that only when the two preconditions—the Way (*dao*) being demolished and the ethics of humanity destroyed—were fulfilled, can such an unnatural occurrence of foster father-son relationships be realized. According to him, Li Keyong's unethical practices led to Mingzong of Later Tang, Chudi of Later Jin, and Shizong 世宗 (r. 954-959) of Later Zhou having been adopted sons. It was significant and unique that adopted sons succeeded the throne frequently in three out of the Five Dynasties.²³⁰

Ouyang Xiu's characterization of Li Keyong's foster father-son relationships as unethical seems to disregard previous instances of adoption in "Chinese" dynastic history. Primarily, the foster father-son relationships seen in "Chinese" dynastic history were to carry on the imperial family line, which I name to be bloodline succession adoption. For instance, when princes of the Tang dynasty died without successors, sons from other sub-imperial lines succeeded them.²³¹ In most of these cases, the successor was chosen from the closest relatives to the imperial family.

Adopting sons from a different ancestry can also be found during the Tang dynasty especially among generals, which I name as "mass adoption." For example, Gao Kaidao 高開道 (d. 624), who rebelled against the Sui and Tang courts, had foster sons (*yangzi* 養子) numbering

²³⁰ In terms of Shatuo adoption cases, see Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, 21-23.

²³¹ For instance, Tang Gaozu's third son, Li Xuanba 李玄霸 (599-614), died young. So, Taizong's fourth son, Li Tai 李泰 (620-653), became his successor. However, as Li Tai was enfeoffed as Prince of Wei 越王, an imperial son, Li Baoding 李保定, succeeded Li Xuanba (*XTS* 79:3545).

in the hundreds and used them as his personal guards. Similarly, one of Taizong's chancellors, Zhang Liang 張亮 (d. 646), was known for having approximately five hundred foster sons (*jiazi* 假子) who were suspected to be troops in his personal military.²³² An Lushan called eight thousand of his strong soldiers, whose origins were Tongluo 同羅, Xi 奚, or Khitans, his foster sons (*jiazi*).²³³ Yang Fugong 楊復恭, who was a prominent eunuch during Zhaozong's reign, also had adoptive sons. A historical survey of adoption uncovers Ouyang Xiu's preconditions of the adoption of sons and his disparagement of Li Keyong's usage of adoption as biased. Then how should we understand the adoption practice of Li Keyong and why is it related to their identity?

Although similar in nature to the mass adoption strategies of the generals of Sui and Tang dynasties including Gao Kaidao, Zhang Liang, and An Lushan; Li Keyong's practice of adoption had a crucial difference. While the purpose of the formers' adoptions was solely for personal protection, the latter's adoptions not only served for personal protection, but also as a tool for succession, which I name to be targeted adoption. The origin of Li Keyong's targeted adoption is unclear. Li Keyong's targeted adoption to his origin as an Inner Asian foreigner, his practice of adoption might be understood as an extension of the nomadic custom of adopting sons.

The Successions: Crisis of Adopted Brothers?

Although unique, Li Keyong's adoption strategy finds a precedence once in the early medieval period when the Sixteen Barbarian Kingdoms competed with one another. Jie 羯, one of the Five

²³² *XWDS* 94:3829.

²³³ *ZZTJ* 216:6905; *XTS* 225a:6414.

Barbarians, established Later Zhao 後趙 (319-351). Ran Min, who is once known as Shi Min 石閔 (r. 350-352), was one of the adopted sons or grandsons of Shi Hu 石虎 (295–349), the third ruler of Later Zhao.²³⁴ Ran Min was ethnically Han, but adopted the surname, Shi, like his father, Shi Zhan 石瞻, who was later installed as the Commander of Chief 將兵都尉 of Later Zhao.²³⁵ After Shi Hu died, Ran Min actively participated in the succession political struggle. He convinced his foster uncle Shi Zun, the oldest son of Shi Hu, to raise a coup against Shi Shi, the chosen successor of Shi Hu. In return for his loyalty, Ran Min was promised to be installed as the heir apparent. Ultimately, this promise was not realized, as Shi Zun not only installed his own son as the crown prince but also plotted to kill Ran Min. Ran Min eventually founded his own autonomous state called Wei 魏.²³⁶ Li Keyong's case is comparable to that of Ran Min's for two reasons. First, like Ran Min's case, Li Keyong's adopted sons were active in the military of Li Keyong's Jin fiefdom. Second, similar to how Ran Min was heavily involved in the succession struggles, likewise, Li Keyong's adopted sons were considered as viable candidates to succeed Li Keyong without any regard to their actual origins or backgrounds. I argue that the added condition to Li Keyong's targeted adoption strategy that considers adopted sons as candidates with a claim to the throne contributed to the Shatuo Turkic dynasties political dominance during this chaotic period when compared to other regimes.

²³⁴ *History of Jin (Jin shu)* records that Ran Min was adopted grandson of Shi Hu (*Jin shu* 107:2793) while *ZZTJ* records that he was *yangxi* 養息 (*ZZTJ* 99:3113). Hu Sanxing, the commentator of *ZZTJ*, commented that *xi* 息 was son (*zi* 子). However, Hu Sanxing also commented that Ran Min was Shi Hu's "adopted grandson" (*yangsun* 養孫) (*ZZTJ* 98:3102). Initially, Ran Min's father, Ran Zhan 冉瞻 (Shi Zhan), was a adopted son of Shi Hu, but there is no record that Shi Hu made Ran Min as son, as he did to Ran Zhan. So, I follow *Jin shu*'s version.

²³⁵ *ZZTJ* 94:2960.

²³⁶ For this reason, historically Ran Min's Wei is called Ran Wei.

Even starting from before the Five Dynasties during the time of the Jin fiefdom, succession was not thoroughly systemized. Li Keyong never installed anyone as his successor until his death bed. Although Li Keyong's first biological son, Li Cunxu (future Zhuangzong of Later Tang), was nominated as successor, he was not able to convince his strong uncles and kinsmen including his adopted brothers. Li Keyong's younger brother, Li Kening 李克寧 (d. 908), proved to be the biggest threat to Li Cunxu's rise to the throne. In the beginning, Li Kening seemed to accept his nephew as the legitimate successor but was convinced otherwise by Li Cunhao 李存顯, one of Li Keyong's adopted sons. Li Cunhao's was able to persuade Li Kening with the reason that there were precedents of fraternal succession in the past.²³⁷ Additionally, many of the adopted brothers of Li Cunxu further opposed Li Cunxu's succession as prince of Jin so they sent their own wives to coax Li Kening's wife. The detailed cases of fraternal succession are not specifically listed, but it can be ascertained that there was a common understanding within the family that brothers could succeed the throne. However, the plot to overthrow Li Cunxu was unsuccessful with his eventual rise to the throne without the consent of his kinsmen. This episode is crucial by underscoring that not only biological kinsmen, but also adopted kinsmen could actively participate in the political game of succession.

However, not much later, in the next episode involving imperial succession, we can observe the rise of an adopted brother to the throne. Li Cunxu, following in the steps of his father, did not officially install his heir apparent during his reign. Neither *JWDS* nor *XWDS* recorded any biological princes of Zhuangzong as an heir apparent. Among his sons, the most likely candidate for heir apparent was his first biological son, Li Jiji 李繼岌 (d. 926), with

²³⁷ *ZZTJ* 166:8690.

Zhuangzong appointing him as Prince of Wei in 925, two years after he founded Later Tang.²³⁸

Zhuangzong seems to have promised to appoint Li Jiji as heir apparent in advance if he succeeded in conquering Shu. *ZZTJ* records that the Tang officials considered Li Jiji as a crown prince (*taizi* 太子), but both *JDWS* and *XWDS* state that he will only be installed as crown prince after conquering Shu.²³⁹

Yet, Li Jiji never received the official title and office. In the process of conquering Former Shu, even though Li Jiji contributed significantly to Later Jin's success, Zhuangzong must not have been able to announce his son as heir apparent because of a conflict that arose between Li Jiji and Guo Chongtao 郭崇韜 (d. 926), a loyal servant who contributed significantly to the conquest of Later Liang. Guo Chongtao was ambitious and planned to remove the eunuchs around Zhuangzong. The eunuchs, catching wind of his plans, falsely accused him. For Li Jiji, who was discontent with sharing valuables and goods with Guo Chongtao, removing Guo Chongtao was the best available path in which to recover his honor. Although Zhuangzong initially believed Guo Chongtao's innocence, after the conquest of the Shu court, he eventually granted the execution of Guo Chongtao by the order of his wife, Empress Liu, who was driven to protect her own son. This incident ultimately led to some unintended consequences. Li Cunyi 李存乂 (d. 926), Zhuangzong's half-brother and Guo Chongtao's son-in-law, was also executed which brought about a lack of confidence in Zhuangzong's rule. In the end, Zhuangzong was killed by a coup d'état.

As a result, Zhuangzong was neither able to maintain his own emperorship nor install any of his other biological sons as heir apparent. According to the records, Zhuangzong had four

²³⁸ *ZZTJ* 273:8936.

²³⁹ *ZZTJ* 274:8952; *JWDS* 57:772; *XWDS* 24:258.

other biological sons, Jitong 繼潼, Jichan 繼蟾, Jisong 繼嵩, and Ji Yao 繼堯, whose mothers were unknown.²⁴⁰ There are records of them being appointed as Grand Master for Splendid Happiness 光祿大夫 and Acting Minister 檢校司徒 in 925, however, they disappeared after Zhuangzong was killed. According to *Critical Commentary to the Old History of Five Dynasties* (*Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* 舊五代史考異), the biological sons of Zhuangzong defected to the Later Shu court where Zhuangzong's sister was married off to.²⁴¹

One of Zhuangzong's adopted brothers, Li Siyuan, successfully ascended the throne and became emperor of Later Tang with support from the other Shatuo generals and became Emperor Mingzong. His background was never questioned although his origin was unclear. When Li Siyuan was born, he was named Miao Jilie 邈佺烈 and did not have a surname.²⁴² He later changed his name to Li Siyuan after he was adopted by Li Keyong. After distinguishing himself in numerous battles starting from the suppression of the Huang Chao rebellion, Li Siyuan built a reputation for being a loyal servant and son of Li Keyong. Li Siyuan's reign was never questioned by the Shatuo Turkic imperial family due to his filial connection to Li Keyong and his prowess as a military leader.

In similar fashion to his predecessors, Li Siyuan did not formally designate his successor when he was alive. His first biological son, Li Congrong 李從榮 (d. 933) raised a military against his father and was eventually killed. His second biological son, Li Conghou 李從厚 (r. 933-934), eventually succeeded him. However, only a year later, Li Siyuan's adopted son, Li Congke overthrew his foster brother. Alike Li Siyuan, Li Congke's origin was not questioned

²⁴⁰ *XWDS* 14:152.

²⁴¹ *XWDS* 14:154.

²⁴² *ZZTJ* 255:8307.

even though he seemed to come from a Han family, considering his pre-adoption surname was Wang 王.²⁴³

Li Congke's reign was stopped by his brother-in-law and primary adversary, Shi Jingtang, who was aware of Li Congke's animosity towards him. Shi Jingtang first provoked Li Congke by questioning his legitimation a few years after his succession. In a "tributary memorial" (*biao* 表), he said, "since your majesty is an adopted son, you cannot succeed the ancestral rites. So please abdicate your throne to Prince of Xu."²⁴⁴ Even though Shi Jingtang wanted to overthrow Li Congke, this task was not possible without the military support of the Liao, the Khitan state to the north. Ironically, he ended up in a foster father-son relationship with the Khitans. Shi Jingtang was able to receive military support from the Khitans after becoming the adopted son of the Liao emperor, Taizong. This new foster relationship cemented Shi Jingtang's rise to the throne.

Shi Jingtang is known to have a Shatuo Turkic background. Though the origins of his family seem to differ in the historiographies, both records concur that Shi Jingtang's ancestors joined the Shatuo military group during the reign of Tang Xianzong (r. 805-820).²⁴⁵ Considering that *JWDS* was compiled only a few decades after Shi Jingtang's reign, it is likely that Shi family aspired to have a dual identity including both Han and Shatuo.²⁴⁶

Since most of Shi Jingtang's biological sons died, he adopted Shi Chonggui (r. 942-947), who was originally Shi Jingtang's nephew, as his own son. Shi Chonggui was not officially made as an heir apparent when Shi Jingtang was alive. After Shi Jingtang's death, he was

²⁴³ *JWDS* 46:625.

²⁴⁴ *ZZTJ* 280:9143.

²⁴⁵ *JWDS* 75:977; *XWDS* 8:77. *XWDS* directly reveals that his father was Nieliji 梟捩雞 and there is no evidence for his surname, Shi.

²⁴⁶ This strategy is seen in the myth of Tuoba Xianbei.

selected as a legitimate successor by the chancellors. Yet, only a year later, Later Jin was defeated by Liao and a Shatuo Turkic official and general, Liu Zhiyuan (r. 947-948), took the opportunity to usurp the throne, becoming Emperor Gaozu of Later Han. His biological son, Liu Chengyou 劉承祐 (r. 948-951) succeeded him, but like previous cases, he was never established as the official heir apparent.

While many will view this succession schema as unstructured or unstable, within the confusion lays the undeniable fact that the Shatuo Turks maintained power over a long period of time. Ironically, the targeted adoption strategy and the allowance of adopted kinsmen to be active in the succession struggle, coupled with the practice of not officially electing an heir apparent laid the foundations of a political “survival of the fittest.” The most politically adept and militarily adept members of the Shatuo Turkic “elite” rose to the throne. With strong leadership, the Shatuo Turkic “elite” were able to maintain political dominance during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period for approximately thirty years (fifty years when considering their rule over Northern Han (951-979), a Shatuo Turkic state among the Ten Kingdoms).

Conclusion

There were four key criteria “language,” “physiognomy,” “custom,” and “occupation,” that were used by contemporaries to differentiate the Shatuo Turks from the Han people. The language of the Shatuo was called *huyu* or *fanyu* in most cases and they were distinguished based on the physiognomy of having “deep eyes and high nose.” The Shatuo worshiped their own deities who were called *fanshen* and were primarily associated with the occupation of herding sheep and horses. With these traits, is it possible to conclude that if a person with “deep eyes and high

nose” speaks *fanyu*, practices rituals to *fanshen*, and raises sheep and horses, then he or she is ethnically a Shatuo Turk?

None of these criteria successfully offer an absolute criterion to distinguish the Shatuo Turks from the Han people. Although they used a different language, it is not clear if the language was distinct to the Shatuo Turks. The physiognomic trait of “deep eyes” has been traced to antiquity when rather than being used to specify ethnicity, the trait was rather used along with absurd descriptions to diminish *others*. Even with such imaginative origins, sources show that these physiognomic traits attributed to the Shatuo Turks was not unique to their people. Additionally, the analysis of the two different customs of worshipping their Heavenly god and using luck for important decision-making shows that these customs have a precedent derived from other nomadic peoples such as Xiongnu and Xianbei. These customs cannot be used as distinct markers for solely the Shatuo Turks. Rather these traits seem to be invoked for many *Others* and a convenient method in which to diminish the Shatuo Turks in relation to the Han people.

Specifically with regards to their occupation, it is clear that Song records distinguished the Shatuo Turks as “barbarians” by connecting them to their stereotypical nomadic occupation of “raising sheep and horses.” This generalization fails to consider that pasturage was applicable not only to nomadic peoples but also to the sedentary Han people. The phenomenon of pasturage within “Chinese” dynastic history can be witnessed starting from the time of the Northern Wei dynasty. Furthermore, the Li family of the Shatuo Turks or the Shatuo Turkic “elite” cannot be characterized as herders. Ever since the late ninth century, there is considerable evidence that they were recognized as warlords, politicians, generals, and rulers. Standing in stark contrast to Song historiography, Shatuo Turkic *emic* sources such as *JTS*, which was compiled and

completed during the Shatuo Turkic Later Jin dynasty, and Li Keyong's stone inscription which reflected the deceased's identity, never mention their ties to "raising sheep and horses" showing a clear separation between the elite upper strata and the lower strata of Shatuo social hierarchy.

The identity of the Shatuo people was created through their adoption system rather than those criteria. Shatuo Turkic "elite" created their distinct military identity by practicing targeted adoption of talented military personnel. Their unique adoption process was blind to ethnicity with Han people, Shatuo Turkic people, and other nomadic people having the opportunity to join this elite group through their display of military prowess. Other prominent warlords during the period also practiced adoption. For example, Li Keyong's rival warlords, Li Maozhen (856-924) and Zhu Wen (r. 907-912), the Later Liang emperor, also used adoption to expand their power. However, the biggest difference between these warlords and the Shatuo Li family was that the Shatuo Li family's adoption practice was not only limited to the bestowal of their surname but also gave legitimacy for adopted kinsmen to lay claim to the throne. When adopted sons became successors, no one in the family questioned their legitimacy as long as they served as great leaders.

Throughout the history of the three Shatuo Dynasties, none of the leaders officially designated successors when they were alive. Although this caused succession struggles, the Shatuo Turkic "elite" embraced the reality of this political "survival of the fittest" most likely influenced by nomadic competitive backgrounds. The synergy of the Shatuo targeted adoptions, their allowance of adopted kinsmen in the succession process, and the practice of not officially electing heirs apparent, proved to be essential to the political dominance of the Shatuo Turkic "elite" and created a distinct ethnic identity tied through genealogy rather than blood.

**Part II | The Game of Thrones: The Shatuo Turkic States and A New Sino-
Inner Asian Order**

Chapter 3. A Brotherhood Sharing “All Under Heaven” (*tianxia*): The Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and the Khitans

Introduction

Following the collapse of the Tang dynasty, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms shared *tianxia* (the Chinese concept of the metaphysical and/or geographical world, literally translating to “all-under-heaven”). None of these states were singularly powerful enough to restore the former glory of Tang. The Tang-established peace, torn asunder, was now replaced with a *tianxia* inundated with hectic diplomacy which dictated a fragile web of relationships among the states. Moreover, to the north rose the Liao dynasty (916-1125), a new nomadic regime comprised of Khitan tribes, introducing a game-changing player to the power games of these turbulent times. Each state’s delicate practice of diplomatic relations proved to be ripe opportunities in which they could subtly claim superiority over one another. However, due in part to the brevity of the period and the rapid political change, scholars have neglected a close examination of the diplomatic dynamics during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. In this chapter, I explore the intricate relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao by comparing the tributary rhetoric in records documented by both parties and analyzing their exchange of delegations.

Then naturally comes the question, how do the Khitans fit into the shared world of the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms? Alongside the Five Dynasties, I consider Liao to be a key protagonist of this period with a legitimate claim to sharing *tianxia*. At the outset, the Khitans established their empire to fill the void and become a significant player in the power game to seize hegemony. Their desire to claim *tianxia* becomes readily apparent particularly

after Yelü Abaoji (r. 916-926) adopted an era name in 916, a historical first for an Inner Asian state.²⁴⁷ Abaoji also accepted ethnically Han migrants; constructed Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist temples in the capital city; and installed institutions in the style of the “Chinese.” Although many historians discuss this active adoption of “Chinese-styled” systems as a phenomenon of unequivocal Sinicization, categorizing Liao as a “Chinese” state would be hasty considering their fixation on their nomadic roots. The adoption of these systems and institutions was most likely Abaoji’s shrewd strategy to absorb the previous northern territory of Tang, where Han agrarian groups resided, into the Liao empire as efficiently and fluidly as possible. Due to the influx of the Tang population into Khitan territory as well as their adoption of key strategies mentioned above, the Khitans became a legitimate contender in the fight for hegemony under *tianxia*.

The dearth of secondary literature becomes quite evident when consolidating the available literature covering this period, especially with respect to the relationship between Liao and the Five Dynasties. Hino Kaizaburo 日野開三郎, who wrote a general history of the Five Dynasties period, dealt with the relations among the states, primarily concerning himself with the history of warfare.²⁴⁸ More frequently discussed in previous literature was the Khitans’ relationship with Song (960-1276), known as the successor to the Five Dynasties, because of its salient equality.²⁴⁹ However, there is scant literature analyzing the relationship between the Five

²⁴⁷ Here I distinguish Yelü Abaoji’s Khitan Liao from other states with non-Han backgrounds. There were several non-Han states including Northern Wei and their successor states established in North China which claimed to be part of *tianxia*. The progenitors of these states have lived in North China for generations, differing from Abaoji’s Khitan nomadic state. There were other Steppe empires including the Xiongnu, Rouran, Tujue, and Uighur in Inner Asia, but none of them claimed to be part of *tianxia*.

²⁴⁸ Hino Kaizaburō 日野開三郎, *Godaishi no kichō* 五代史の基調, 361-432.

²⁴⁹ See David Curtis Wright, *From War to Diplomatic Parity in Eleventh-Century China: Sung’s Foreign Relations with Kitan Liao. History of Warfare*, and Jing-shen Tao, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations*.

Dynasties and Liao. A look at extant sources illustrates an interconnected Sino-Inner Asia in which each state sent and received delegations through proper diplomatic protocol in pursuit of superiority and peace.

In order to accurately reflect the relations between the two states, I undertook an unconventional approach to the timeworn idea, the “tributary system.” Scholars often view Chinese diplomatic relations as a “tributary system” within the bounds of a “Sinocentric world order.” Although the concept of tributary diplomacy in Chinese history is hackneyed, especially with regards to late-imperial China, scholars have yet to find a more robust model to replace the hierarchical relationship model.²⁵⁰ Accordingly, the hierarchical model can also be applied to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. However, the constraint of “Sinocentric world order” would prove to be an anachronistic criterion for this period, projecting the notion of nation-state to a time where concepts of nations and boundaries were non-existent—painting a predetermined conclusion of the Five Dynasties’ dominance. Taking this into consideration, this chapter studies the relationship between the Five Dynasties and Liao through the lens of a tributary system with some special characteristics: (1) there can be diplomatic parity and symmetry in a nominally “tributary” relation, (2) tributary relations are not centralized or limited to a singular “Sinocentric world order,” or in other words, more than one state can share *tianxia*, and (3) records about the tributary relations can become credible sources in the examination of the *realpolitik* of this period due to the existence of not only *etic* sources but also promising *emic* sources.

²⁵⁰ Since John K. Fairbank and S.Y. Teng introduced the concept of tributary system in “On the Ch’ing Tributary System,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6.2 (1941):135-246, scholars have debated on it. The “asymmetry model” (initiated by Brantly Womack in his *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry*) has been used in 2000s. Peter Perdue’s Colonialism is still valid in his article in *Past and Present in China’s Foreign Policy*. See Peter Perdue, “China and Other Colonial Empires,” in *Past and Present in China’s Foreign Policy: From “Tribute System” to “Peaceful Rise,”* ed. John E. Willis, Jr. (Portland: MerwinAsia, 2011), 77-96. However, no substitute model of the tributary system has been developed so far.

In the examination of the relationship between the states, I frequently rely on diplomatic rhetoric. Specifically, the rhetoric used when identifying the actions of dispatched delegations becomes critical to a thorough analysis of relations. The varied rhetoric describing the dispatching and receiving of delegations can indicate hierarchical or neutral relations. Coincidentally, the delegations sent between the Five Dynasties and Liao account for the large majority of the total delegations sent during this period that are recorded.

In this chapter, I analyze diplomatic rhetoric in an attempt to answer questions such as: How did the Sino-Inner Asian relationship differ from that of the Tang period? To what extent did the Shatuo dynasties influence their relations? I argue that although relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao was in constant flux, Liao enjoyed broad diplomatic parity with the Shatuo Turkic Later Tang court and shared all-under-heaven (*tianxia*). The fictive brotherly relationship established between the Later Tang and Liao founders, which in part can be attributed to their shared nomadic origins, paved the way for a relationship between equals under *tianxia* during the Song dynasty. Although the relationship between Liao and the Five Dynasties transformed into one of a lord-vassal paradigm in which Liao becomes the lord and Later Jin the vassal, the establishment of a relationship between “two sons of heaven” approximately a century prior to the Covenant of Chanyuan is undeniable.²⁵¹

There are three prior instances in history when comparable relationships between the Middle Kingdom and Inner Asian nomadic states existed, specifically between Han and Xiongnu; Tang and Uyghur; and Tang and Tibet. However, the two principal differences are that the Later Tang and the Khitans’ oath-based parity was conducted under a shared *tianxia* and they recognized one another as “emperors” (*huangdi*). Han and Tang had treaties with their nomadic

²⁵¹ I borrowed the concept, “two sons of heaven,” from Tao Jing-shen’s *Two Sons of Heaven*.

neighbors, but they never conceptually shared *tianxia*. Take for example the case of Tang and Tibet. The Lhasa stele of the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821 articulated that Tang and Tibetan people shall have peace in each of their own respective lands.²⁵² This treaty specified that each ruler had sovereignty only over their own realms instead of sharing *tianxia*. Moreover, Xiongnu *chanyu*, Uyghur *qaghan*, and Tibetan *btsan-po* were never called emperors within Chinese historiography. Therefore, by elucidating the Shatuo Turkic Dynasties and Liao's brotherly relationship, I simultaneously prove that their sharing of *tianxia* should be regarded as the first instance in Sino-Inner Asian history.

This chapter will be divided into three distinct sections: (1) I survey the rhetoric used between Liao and the Five Dynasties, interpret how its usage reflected diplomatic relations, and evaluate whether *etic* and *emic* sources were used; (2) examine the relationship between Liao and each of the Five Dynasties; and (3) in conclusion, explore the diplomatic rhetoric in Ouyang Xiu's *New History of Five Dynasties*.

Diplomatic Rhetoric

The key rhetorical term used in the diplomatic relations between the Liao dynasty and the Five Dynasties was *gong* 貢, which has been most often translated as “tribute” or “to provide tribute.” *Gong* is one of the terms which frequently appeared to portray hierarchical diplomatic relationships as well as any hierarchical domestic politics.²⁵³ The use of *gong* directly

²⁵² One of the lines of the treaty of 821 reads: “After the great governments under which the Tibetans are happy in the Tibetan land and the Chinese are happy in the Chinese land are united, a treaty that is made like this may never change.” Translated by Li Fang-Kuei. See Li Fang-Kuei 李方桂, “The Inscription of the Sino-Tibetan Treaty of 821-822,” *T'oung Pao* 44 (1956): 1-99. The Translation is on page 57.

²⁵³ See Peter Perdue, “China and Other Colonial Empires,” 78-81.

distinguishes a clear superior party over an inferior party. As Peter Perdue stated, the English translation “tribute” for *gong* may be inadequate because of its numerous meanings in Chinese. *Gong*’s usage was not restricted to the interpretation of relations between different polities but was rather adaptable to describe any hierarchical relations including those between rulers-officials and officials-commoners. There are similar rhetoric to *gong* like *xian* 獻 and *feng* 奉, and their combinations such as *gong-xian* 貢獻 and *gong-feng* 貢奉. Like *gong*, *xian* and *feng* are rhetorically strong, translating into “to offer up.” However, compared to those two terms, *gong* is used to represent more official relations. *Jin* 進 is also a substitute word for *gong* or *xian*, but with a more neutral nuance that can be translated simply as “to give.” On special occasions, other rhetoric was selected. When envoys were sent to celebrate special days including inaugurations and birthdays of emperors and empress dowagers, “to celebrate” (*he* 賀) was principally used to establish relations. As derogatory terms, “to beg” (*qi* 乞) or “to plead” (*qiujiu* 求救) were sometimes substituted for “to request” (*qing* 請). As I will show, *gong* and its synonyms hold varied and nuanced definitions. Since there is no perfectly suitable translation for *gong*, I translate *gong* as “to provide tribute” or “tribute,” with the understanding that when *gong* is used, it shows the clearest division between a superior and inferior party in official diplomatic relations when compared to counterpart rhetoric.

There are underlying circumstances to be considered with respect to the use of rhetoric, particularly *gong*, which can be generalized into three categories: (1) *gong* was arbitrarily used by “Chinese” sources,²⁵⁴ (2) “Chinese” sources themselves did not agree on the rhetoric to

²⁵⁴ I consider records which only reflected Sinocentric perspective as “Chinese” sources, as stated in the introduction.

describe certain diplomatic relations, and (3) “Chinese” sources did not concur with non-“Chinese” sources.²⁵⁵

Firstly, when describing the relations between “Chinese” empires and nomadic empires, *gong* was intentionally used by “Chinese” sources which often unfairly represented instances of diplomatic relations. Take the case when the Uyghurs asked for a marriage alliance, *heqin* 和親, with the Tang court by allegedly “providing tribute” (*gong*) in the third year (787) of Zhenyuan 貞元 era of Emperor Dezong (r. 779-805).²⁵⁶ At the time, the Uyghurs were not in an inferior position, especially considering they had helped the Tang court suppress the An Lushan rebellion (755-763) when Emperor Dezong was still a prince. The superiority of the Uyghurs during the rebellion is clearly depicted when Uyghur Khan humiliated Dezong, the Prince of Yong at the time, by asking him to dance in public.²⁵⁷ Adding insult to injury, later in his reign Emperor Dezong had to send his real daughter Princess Xian’an to the Uyghurs to consummate a *heqin* treaty.²⁵⁸ The use of *gong* by the “Chinese” sources to describe the relations is evidently intentional and perhaps a method in which to mask their humiliation.

Another case exemplifying the arbitrary use of *gong* concerns the Tibetans. After frequent *heqin* treaties with the Tibetan court, early in 781, the Tang court agreed to change the wording in their letters when the Tibetan court requested that the Tang court stop using demeaning words to refer to them. “To provide tribute” (*gongxian* 貢獻) was changed to “to give” (*jin*); “to bestow” (*ci* 賜) was changed to “to send” (*ji* 寄); and “to acquire (it)” *lingqu*

²⁵⁵ Here, I use Tang-Uyghur and Tang-Tibetan cases, as they provide the standard usage of the rhetoric in the diplomatic between Sino-nomadic empires during this period.

²⁵⁶ *JTS* 195:5208. In terms of marriage alliances in medieval China, see Pan Yihong, “Marriage Alliances and Chinese Princesses in International Politics from Han through T’ang,” *Asia Major* 10 (1997): 95-131.

²⁵⁷ *ZZTJ* 222:7133.

²⁵⁸ *JTS* 12:358; *ZZTJ* 233:7516; *XTS* 217:6123; *XTS* 83:3365.

領取 was changed to “to receive it” *lingzhi* 領之.²⁵⁹ Although these changes were officially approved, *gong* was still occasionally used. According to *Old Tang History*, in 805, an envoy was sent by the Tibetan ruler, *btsan-po* 贊普, to “provide tribute” (*gong*) to the Tang.²⁶⁰ It is important to note that the gift of gold, silver, clothes, cows, and horses for the mausoleum of Dezong might not have differed vastly from prior burial gifts, so therefore, they did not justify the use of *gong*. Moreover, the two courts recognized the equality in their diplomatic relations not only during the late eighth century, but also during the early ninth century.²⁶¹ Considering the mutually consensual parity between the two states, “Chinese” sources once again mischaracterized this diplomatic exchange by using the word *gong*.

Secondly, extant “Chinese” records do not always agree on rhetoric when describing the same diplomatic event. Inconsistency among “Chinese” sources can be found for both the previous Uyghur and Tibetan cases. For the Uyghur case, *JTS* used *gong* while *XTS* documented that an envoy came to “offer up” (*xian*) goods and request *heqin*.²⁶² *ZZTJ* only refers to the Uyghur’s request of *heqin*.²⁶³ In the Tibetan case, *XTS* shows the envoy “gave” (*gui* 歸) grave goods for the deceased Dezong while the event was absent from *ZZTJ*. As can be seen, the rhetoric depicting certain diplomatic relations is conditional to the compilers and their period of writing, style of writing, and circumstances.

Third and most importantly, non-“Chinese” sources sometimes give vastly different accounts from “Chinese” sources. An outstanding example in this regard is when Emperor

²⁵⁹ *XTS* 216b:6093.

²⁶⁰ *JTS* 196b:5261.

²⁶¹ Thanks to the Sino-Tibetan treaty inscription of 821, erected in Lhasa, the diplomatic parity is apparently seen. In terms of Sino-Tibetan treaty, See Yihong Pan, “The Sino-Tibetan Treaties in the Tang Dynasty,” *T’oung Pao* 78, no. 1 (1992):116-161.

²⁶² *XTS* 217a:6122.

²⁶³ *ZZTJ* 233:7501.

Taizong of Tang first made the *heqin* alliance with Songtsen Gampo (d. 650). This diplomatic event was delineated differently by the “Chinese” source (A) *JTS*, and the Tibetan source (B) *The Clear Mirror on Royal Genealogy*, a compilation of Tibetan history and literature from the fourteenth century.

(A) In the eighth year of Zhenguan (634), the king, Songtsen Gampo, sent an envoy with “tribute” (*gong*) for the first time. Songtsen became a king at the age of twenty. Because his nature was ferocious and full of remarkable strategies, the neighbor states, Shangshung and various Qiang groups were subordinated. Taizong sent an envoy, Feng Dexia, to console him. After meeting Dexia, [Songtsen] was delighted. Having heard that both Tujue and Tuyuhun had been married to [Chinese] princesses, [he] sent envoys accompanying Dexia on his way back to the [Tang] court, with lots of gold, precious things, and a letter asking for marriage, which was refused by Taizong... [Songtsen] sent an envoy saying, “If the Great Kingdom does not send me a princess, I will immediately invade.” Later, he attacked Songzhou. ... At night, [Taizong’s General] Jinda launched an attack in the vanguard of the camp and beheaded around a thousand people. Songtsen became so terrified that he withdrew his army. He sent an envoy to the court apologizing for his faults, and then asked for marriage again. Taizong granted the request. Songtsen sent his chancellor Lu Dongzhan (aka Gar Tongtsen) to be ceremonious and “offered up” (*xian*) five-thousand *liang* of gold and hundreds of precious treasures.²⁶⁴

(B) “Surpassing this mundane world, the king then entered into meditation and behaved as if he were in a dream... ‘Last night I dreamed that I took as my wife one beautiful girl who was the daughter of the king of Nepal in the west, and another who was the daughter of the emperor of China in the east.’ ... The princess returned to the palace, and her father the emperor said, ‘You must now go to Tibet to become the Tibetan king’s consort’. The princess replied, ‘I shall never go to such a distant place, devoid of Dharma.’ ... Her father said, ‘Do not speak so. You have no choice.... Once he learns that you have refused his invitation, an army of fifth thousand will descend on us, I will be killed, you will be seized and our land and fortresses captured...’²⁶⁵

Both sources (A) and (B) give their respective accounts of the *heqin* relations between Tang and Tibet. However, they have different perspectives and focuses. According to source (A), by mounting a successful defensive attack with its military, Tang thwarted the Tibetan advance and

²⁶⁴ *JTS* 196a:5221.

²⁶⁵ Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltzen, *The Clear Mirror: A Traditional Account of Tibet’s Golden Age*, translated by McComas Tattylor and Lama Choedak Yuthok (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996), 119 and 143.

received a “polite apology” from the Tibetan ruler resulting in the settling of a final treaty. This portrayal highlights not only the appeasement policy of the Tang court, but also the surrender of the Tibetan ruler. Source (A) also defines Tibetans as inferior to Tang, although at the time, Tang was in the subordinate position. On the other hand, source (B) indicates that the Tang court’s sending of the princess to Songtsen Gampo was compulsory. In similar form to the Nepalese princess, the Tang princess was forcefully sent to Tibet out of fear of the “barbaric” land and to protect her fatherland. The Tibetan record goes on to not only explore Minister Gar’s resourcefulness, which resulted in peaceful relations between the two states, but also vividly illustrate the vulnerability of the Tang.²⁶⁶ Their inherently biased perspectives are also supported by the rhetoric; while source (A) recorded that a Tibetan envoy “provided tribute” to the Tang court, source (B) described it as merely a gift. Each source ultimately details its own colored perspective of the relations at the time. Regardless of which source most adequately reflects reality, the difference in perspective and rhetoric between “Chinese” and non-“Chinese” sources demonstrates the difficulty in interpreting the state of certain diplomatic relations.

Then how can we discern the *realpolitik* in diplomatic relations by utilizing rhetoric from varying perspectives? For the majority of cases, by cross-checking all extant sources, the varying biases can be inhibited and controlled for, allowing for the proper reflection of the relations between two states. The breadth of primary sources including *WDHY* (compiled in 961), *JWDS* (c. 974), *CFYG* (c. 1013), *XWDS* (c. 1077), *ZZTJ* (c. 1084), *QDGZ* (c. 1247) and *LS* (c. 1344), makes cross-checking possible for the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period.

²⁶⁶ In *The Clear Mirror*, after Songtsen Gampo decided to have marriage alliance with China (Tang), he sends Minister Gar to the Chinese court to bring a Chinese Princess. Minister Gar passed many exams conducted by Chinese emperor (Tang Taizong), and was finally able to take the princess back to Tibet (Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltsen, *The Clear Mirror*, 134-142).

The biggest challenge in terms of sources is the paucity of *emic* sources to the Khitans when compared to the amount of *etic* sources. Because the majority of existing sources are written in Chinese, the perspective of the Khitan peoples might be excluded. Considering that the Khitan scripts have not been fully deciphered²⁶⁷ and works completed by the Liao history office have been lost, the sources listed above are the only sources available to gauge the diplomatic relations. However, I consider the rhetoric in these sources to be legitimate barometers of *realpolitik* for following reasons. First, the various “Chinese” sources, including *WDHY*, *JWDS*, *XWDS*, *LS*, and *ZZTJ* can supplement one another. Although not all records match due to differences of compilers and political situations when compiled, the multiplicity of sources make cross-checks possible. Secondly, *LS* can be used as a somewhat faithful substitute for the original Khitan sources. Even though *LS* was compiled during the Yuan dynasty, it was a consolidation of previous Liao sources including “Veritable Records of Imperial Dynasty” (*huangchao shilu*).²⁶⁸ I consider it as the closest to a Liao *emic* source that historians can find today.²⁶⁹ And thirdly, since the sources were written in the same language, it lessens the ambiguity behind each term.

²⁶⁷ Khitan scripts are divided into two: large scripts and small scripts. For an introduction of the Khitan scripts, see Daniel Kane, *The Kitan Language and Script* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1-33. In terms of studies of Khitan small scripts, see Liu Fengzhu, “Seventy Years of Khitan Small Script Studies,” *Studia Orientalia* 87 (1999): 159-169.

²⁶⁸ It was compiled under the supervision of Yelü Yan 耶律儼, Northern Court Ceremonial Commissioner 北院宣徽使, during the Qiantong 乾統 era (1101-1110) of Emperor Tianzuo 天祚帝 (r. 1101-1125) of Liao. Yelü Yan’s biography is seen in *LS* 98:1415-1416.

²⁶⁹ Standen argues that *LS* was a collection of all the surviving historiographies (not only work from the Liao history office but also Song complications), but only some of the sources were connected to the Liao history office. See Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, 35-40. I believe that especially the diplomatic rhetoric was a reflection of the original work of the Liao history office. This is because the rhetoric used was very different from that in *CFYG*, *WDHY*, *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ*. For example, when dispatching envoys to the Five Dynasties, *gong* was never used in *LS*, while *gong* was the predominant rhetoric to describe hegemony in relation with Liao in *CFYG*, *WDHY*, and *JWDS*.

Relations between Later Liang and the Khitans

The Precondition: Yelü Abaoji's Establishment of the Khitan Empire

Before I explore the relations between the Later Liang, the first of the Five Dynasties, and the Khitans, it is imperative to understand Yelü Abaoji's road to power.²⁷⁰ Abaoji organized and united the various Khitan tribes under a singular empire, allowing for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states Later Liang and the Khitan confederation, which later became the Liao dynasty. According to the Basic Annal in *LS*, Abaoji was installed as emperor in 907.²⁷¹ It is dubious whether he took the throne under the name of *huangdi*, as sources show different accounts of his accession. Unlike *LS*'s account which characterizes Abaoji as an emperor starting from 907, *XWDS* states that Abaoji's installation as emperor was in 916.²⁷² In addition, *LS* records a second Abaoji accession in 916.²⁷³ I assume that in the year of 907, he became the qaghan of the Khitan confederation and was installed as emperor of the newly found Liao dynasty in 916, as implied by the institutional revision of *LS*.²⁷⁴

After his rise to leader of the Khitans, Abaoji's establishment of his consolidated empire took another decade. Due to tribal regulations and precedent, Abaoji's rulership lacked a guarantee of permanency because precedent called for abdication of the throne by Khitan leaders every three years. In order to maintain his stature, he had to seize control of the other eight

²⁷⁰ For the details of Abaoji's rise to power, see Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 53-60.

²⁷¹ *LS* 1:3.

²⁷² *XWDS* 72:888.

²⁷³ *LS* 1:10.

²⁷⁴ See Luo Xin 羅新, *Heizhan shang de Beiwei huangdi* 黑氐上的北魏皇帝 (Beijing: Haitun Chubanshe, 2014), 96-122; also see Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," 60-68.

tribes.²⁷⁵ The throne was further challenged internally by his own brothers. His four younger brothers Lage 剌葛, Diela 迭剌, Yindishi 寅底石, and Anduan 安端, rose in revolt in 911 and 912.²⁷⁶ Even though Abaoji forgave them,²⁷⁷ people in his own clan continuously rebelled, which led to the slaughter of three hundred traitors in 914.²⁷⁸

In addition to solidifying his grasp over the northern tribal people, Abaoji had to deal with other warlords, Liu Shouguang 劉守光 (d. 914) and Li Keyong, to the south. After Liu Shouguang confined his father, Liu Rengong, in 907, he installed himself as emperor of Yan 燕 in 911.²⁷⁹ Li Keyong also proved to be a persistent adversary. In 908, four months after Li Keyong's death, Abaoji attempted to take advantage of the development by sending an envoy to the Liang court to "provide tribute" (*gong*), promising to attack Li Keyong's political base, Jin.²⁸⁰ By recognizing the complexity behind Abaoji's rise to power, it is clear that Liao's relationship with Later Liang should be analyzed with the understanding that Abaoji held consolidated power of the Khitans only after 916. Before his consolidation of power, Abaoji had to pay more attention to Li Keyong's Jin and Liu Shouguang's Yan rather than Later Liang because of geopolitical factors, as Jin and Liu were more adjacent to the Khitans. Therefore, diplomatic relations between Later Liang and Liao should be studied with the understanding that relations before and after 916 were quite disparate.

²⁷⁵ The Khitans defeated the "Black Cart" 黑車子, a branch of Shiwei, in 907, 908, and 909, and also Wuwan 烏丸 in 908. Several tribes of Xi 奚 were also defeated by the Khitans in 911 and 912.

²⁷⁶ *LS* 1:3-5.

²⁷⁷ *ZZTJ* recorded that one of his brothers who had rebelled fled to Jin and became a foster son of the Jin ruler. Later, he ran away to the Liang court. See *ZZTJ* 270:8841.

²⁷⁸ *LS* 1:14. The revolt from his own tribe seems to have finished when he installed his son, Bei 倍, as Heir Apparent. However, his younger brother, Lage, rebelled again and fled to Youzhou where Li Cunxu was stationed in 917 (*LS* 1:12).

²⁷⁹ *LS* 1:5.

²⁸⁰ *ZZTJ* 266:8700.

The Relationship

Diplomatic relations between Later Liang and the Khitans can be split into three distinct phases: (1) before 907, the pre-dynastic period when both Abaoji and Zhu Wen (r. 907-912), the first emperor of Later Liang, were establishing their respective dynasties; (2) between 907 and 916, the period when Zhu Wen reigned as emperor of Later Liang; and (3) after 916, from the start of Abaoji's apparent second installation.

The first phase starts before the collapse of Tang and encompasses the pre-dynastic period when both Abaoji and Zhu Wen were laying the foundations for the establishment of their respective dynasties. In 906, Zhu Wen was one of the Tang warlords fighting against one another for supremacy. Considering he was planning to overthrow the Tang dynasty the following year, Zhu Wen probably needed to ingratiate himself with the Khitans so he decided to send gifts to Abaoji. In the second month of 906, Zhu Wen from Bianzhou 汴州 sent an envoy “to visit” (*pin*) Abaoji with valuable goods.²⁸¹ Even though this was not the beginning of an official relationship between the states, it was the first attempt at friendly relations.

However, Abaoji's reciprocation to this attempt came as less sincere with his practicing of a dual alliance, the key characteristic of the first phase. He maintained cordial relationships with not only Zhu Wen, but also with Li Keyong. Li Keyong, one of Zhu Wen's most prominent rivals at the time, forged a covenant with Abaoji. Li Keyong and Abaoji's covenant appears to have been more formal than the relationship between Zhu Wen and Abaoji. Abaoji took three hundred thousand troops to Yunzhou 雲州 in order to formalize the pact with Li Keyong. It was

²⁸¹ *LS* 1:2.

there where they realized their brotherly ties; as a token, Li Keyong offered gold and silk, while Abaoji later sent a thousand horses to Li Keyong. A covenant was finally consummated to defeat Zhu Wen.²⁸²

Abaoji's dual diplomacy changed starting from 907 when Zhu Wen became the first emperor of Later Liang and sent an envoy to the Khitan court "to report" (*gao*) them about his accession, giving rise to the second phase of the relationship.²⁸³ Instead of attacking Liang as agreed to with Li Keyong, Abaoji actively sent envoys to maintain friendly relations with Later Liang. The relations were formalized after Abaoji sent Meilao 梅老 as an envoy to Later Liang twice in 907.²⁸⁴ Most of the sources agree that the relationship was hierarchical. The sources *WDHY*, *CFYG*, and *ZZTJ* show Abaoji "pay[ing] tribute" (*gong*) to the Liang court and frequently use the term *gong* to refer to the actions of the Liao delegations.²⁸⁵ Additionally, *LS* records the Liang envoy as having "visit[ed]" (*pin*).²⁸⁶ The Khitan court distinguished the rhetoric used for the Liang envoys from those of other states. When envoys from other regimes including Li Keyong's Jin and Wuyue arrived, they "provided tribute (*gong*)" rather than "visiting" which was used for Later Liang.²⁸⁷

The third phase starts after the death of Zhu Wen. After Zhu Wen was killed by his son, Zhu Yougui 朱友珪 (r. 912-913), the relationship between the Khitans and Liang deviated from the short-lived *status quo*. There are no records of the Khitans sending delegations to the Liang court after the initial sending of envoys to attend the ritual burial ceremony for Zhu Wen in 912.

²⁸² *XWDS* 72:887.

²⁸³ *LS* 1:3.

²⁸⁴ At the time, Abaoji requested Zhu Wen to install him as emperor with providing "tributary memorial." *XWDS* 72:887.

²⁸⁵ *CFYG* 972:11419; *WDHY* 29:2-1; *ZZTJ* 266:8700.

²⁸⁶ *LS* 1:4.

²⁸⁷ *LS* 1:12.

Yet, records show five instances of envoys being sent from Liang to the Khitans. In 916, Lang Gongyuan 郎公遠 was sent to the Khitans in “celebration” (*he*) of Abaoji’s second accession.²⁸⁸ Two years later, Liang envoys visited the Khitan court.²⁸⁹ In 920, Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r. 913-923), the last emperor of Later Liang, appointed a general as Khitan Proclamation Commissioner 契丹宣諭使.²⁹⁰ The extant sources show a one-sided diplomacy post-916 suggesting a change in the balance of the previously established relationship.

The Diplomatic Relations between Later Tang and the Khitans

Li Keyong’s and Abaoji’s newfound brotherly covenant set the tone of the diplomatic relations between Later Tang and the Khitans. However, their relations were interlaced with periods of cyclic alliance and betrayal. As case in point, when Abaoji went to Yunzhou 雲州 to meet with Li Keyong in 907, Li Keyong rejected the counsel to take this opportune chance to kill Abaoji. Later, when Abaoji struck a friendly chord with Zhu Wen, Li Keyong regretted his previous decision.²⁹¹ According to Wang Yucheng’s 王禹偁 *Lost Stories of the Five Dynasties* 五代史闕文, Li Keyong left a will on his deathbed in 908 to his son and successor, Li Cunxu (r. 923-926) the future first emperor of Later Tang. Bequeathing three arrows to his son, Li Keyong urged him to use these three arrows for very specific purposes: one to suppress Liu Rengong, one to attack Abaoji, and the other to destroy Zhu Wen. Li Keyong noted that Abaoji had not only

²⁸⁸ *LS* 1:11.

²⁸⁹ *LS* 1:12.

²⁹⁰ The Pacification Commissioner was a position whose role was to gauge public sentiment in the local area. *CFYG* 217:2609-1; *JWDS* 10:144; *XWDS* 3:27.

²⁹¹ *ZZTJ* 266:8679-8680.

violated the covenant of brotherly relations, but also hampered the restoration of the Tang dynasty.²⁹² Abaoji's betrayal and Li Keyong's will are reflective of the externally brotherly, yet internally complicated relations between the two states.

Although the brotherly relations between the two states had been established earlier between Abaoji and Li Keyong, it is likely that the Khitan court did not recognize Li Keyong's political regime, Jin, as an equal counterpart until after Li Cunxu was installed as the emperor of Later Tang. Before Li Cunxu's installation as emperor of the Later Tang, *LS*'s record shows that Jin envoys "provided tribute" (*gong*). The records of *JWDS* and *ZZTJ* reveal examples of Jin sending envoys to Liao with the absence of any rhetoric that implied hierarchical relationship.²⁹³ However, after Li Cunxu's installation as emperor of the Later Tang, the rhetoric used for the relations changed in *LS*. Although the Later Tang envoys frequently visited the Khitan court, this time, they "visited" (*pin*) instead of "providing tribute" (*gong*).

Despite the Khitans' frequent invasions intermittently sabotaging the relations between the two states, the brotherly relationship endured as can be seen during periods of mourning for deceased emperors. After the death of Li Cunxu, Li Siyuan (Mingzong), who had just become emperor of Later Tang, sent Abaoji an envoy to announce the death. Abaoji's reaction is remarkable since it provides valuable insight into the state of relations between the two states.

The emperor sent the Palace Servitor, Yao Kun to inform sadness to the Khitans. [After] the Khitan ruler heard that Zhuangzong was killed due to military insurgency, he cried sorrowfully and said, "[He is] a son of my *chaoding*. I wished to rescue him, Parhae had not been suppressed yet, so I could not go, resulting in my child receiving this." His crying did not stop. The barbarian word, "*chaoding*" meant "friends" in Chinese. ... [He] continued, "Even though my child and I have had relations generationally, he repeatedly battled against me. The current Son of Heaven does not have a grudge against me, it is

²⁹² *ZZTJ* 266:8688-8689.

²⁹³ The first case was when Li Keyong died; an envoy was sent to Khitan to inform him of Li Keyong's death (*JWDS* 137:1828). The second case was when Jin was in battle against Liang. Li Cunxu sent an envoy to ask for cavalry (*JWDS* 137:1828; *ZZTJ* 266:8694).

enough to have a friendly relationship. If he gives me the northern part of Great River, I will not invade the south again.” [Yao] Kun said, “This is not something an envoy could authorize.” The Khitan ruler became so angry that he imprisoned him. More than ten days later, [he] called him again, and said, “If Hebei is difficult [for me] to acquire, getting Zhenzhou, Dingzhou, and Youzhou would be enough. [He] gave [Yao Kun] paper and urged him to write a petition. When Kun did not agree to, [the Khitan ruler] wanted to kill him, [but] Han Yanhui advised [him not to]. Then he imprisoned him again.

帝遣供奉官姚坤告哀於契丹。契丹主聞莊宗為亂兵所害，慟哭曰：「我朝定兒也。吾方欲救之，以勃海未下，不果往，致吾兒及此。」哭不已。虜言「朝定」，猶華言朋友也。...又曰：「吾兒與我雖世舊，然屢與我戰爭；於今天子則無怨，足以脩好。若與我大河之北，吾不復南侵矣。」坤曰：「此非使臣之所得專也。」契丹主怒，囚之，旬餘，復召之，曰：「河北恐難得，得鎮、定、幽州亦可也。」給紙筆趣令為狀。坤不可，欲殺之，韓延徽諫，乃復囚之。

The first part of the conversation between Abaoji and the envoy, Yao Kun, confirms the brotherly relationship between the two heads of state. This display of mourning could have possibly been for diplomatic show in front of the envoy. However, Abaoji's determination to stand by the brotherly relationship even when considering Abaoji's and Li Cunxu's recurrent infidelity to their relationship reveals that Abaoji fundamentally still regarded Li Cunxu as a diplomatic brother. The second part reveals Abaoji's endless ambition even in such instances that required a gentle touch. He might have wanted to restore the friendly relations but his twofold attitude resulted in a diplomatic discourtesy.

Coincidentally, Abaoji died the same month (the seventh month of 926) when Liao envoys were sent to Later Tang. After hearing the tragic news, Mingzong proclaimed an edict and postponed public affairs for three days to mourn Abaoji's death. In this edict, he emphasized that the Khitans and Tang had been bound together by covenant for generations and that mutual visits (*pinwen* 聘問) were to be conducted in an orderly manner.²⁹⁴ Afterwards, the emphasis on the brotherly relationship between the two states became more commonplace. When Yelü Tuyu

²⁹⁴ JWDS 37:512.

耶律突欲, the original heir apparent of Abaoji who was excluded from the throne by his mother Empress Dowager Shulü, fled to the Tang court, Mingzong not only accepted him, but also later appointed him to important offices with the justification that “because his father and I promised to become brothers, Zhanhua 贊華 (Yelü Tuyu’s Chinese name) returned to me.”²⁹⁵

These relations continued even after the collapse of Later Tang. Yelü Deguang 耶律德光, Taizong of Liao (r. 927-947), following his father’s legacy, preserved the brotherly relations with the Tang imperial family while suppressing the Later Jin court. When he encountered Decent Consort Wang 王淑妃 of Mingzong in the capital city of Later Jin, Liao Taizong bowed to her as a token of respect, saying “she is my older brother’s wife (*sao* 嫂),” which confirms the brotherly relations between him and the Tang imperial family.²⁹⁶

Deeming the relations between Later Tang and the Khitans as one of parity is challenged by some of the sources. While *LS* records consistently underscore the diplomatic relations between the two states as equal, with exception to the time before Li Cunxu was installed as the Tang emperor, the *WDHY*, *CFYG*, and *JWDS* records portray the Khitans as inferior to Later Tang. Some instances of Khitan envoys’ visits to the Later Tang court were recorded as “to provide tribute” (*gong*). These recordings might reflect a real hierarchy. Nevertheless,

²⁹⁵ *ZZTJ* 277:9067. Since Mingzong and Abaoji did not have a brotherly relationship other than nephew and uncle relations based on Li Keyong and Abaoji’s covenant, it could be an error, or perhaps Mingzong intended to refer to the close relationship between himself and Yelü Tuyu. Also, *CFYG* gives a similar report. Because I and the deceased man promised to become brothers, Zhanhua return to me.”

吾與其先入約為兄弟故贊華來附。See *CFYG* 170:2058.

²⁹⁶ *ZZTJ* 286:9346. This incident happened after Liao attacked the Later Jin court in 947. Liao Emperor Taizong went to Daliang 大梁, the capital city of Later Jin. At the time, Decent Consort Wang of Mingzong of Later Tang was attending a wedding ceremony in the capital city and encountered Taizong. Taizong bowed to her as she was a consort of Mingzong whom he had a brotherly relation with. The *ZZTJ*’s commentator, Hu Sanxing, commented that Taizong referred to her “sao,” as Mingzong was older than himself.

considering the brotherly relations which continued for generations and the Later Tang's outward manner towards the Khitans, it is more likely that their relations were one between equals.

The diplomatic parity between the Later Tang and the Khitans is also demonstrated by the format of the official documents used between the emperors, one of the major factors that should be considered when gauging the hierarchy between the two states. Generally, in hierarchical relations, the dominant party issued imperial edicts (*zhao* 詔 or *zhaoshu* 詔書), while the inferior party offered up “tributary memorials” while calling themselves “servants” (*chengchen fengbiao* 稱臣奉表). If neither a power struggle or hierarchical relationship existed, simply a letter (*shu* 書) form was used, which showed relational parity.

After the covenant was made in 907, it is likely that the two states did not explicitly establish respective official terms of hierarchy for one another. There are several cases where they exchanged both unofficial and official letters (*shu*). After Abaoji died, Taizong sent envoys with a letter (*shu*) asking for (*qiu*) a tombstone for his father's mausoleum.²⁹⁷ In 928, Mingzong received a report through a letter (*shu*) from Youzhou that Liao requested a musical instrument. In response to the letter, Mingzong dispatched envoys “to send” (*yi* 遺) a jade pipe later in the same year.²⁹⁸ The Later Tang emperors reciprocally sent letters to the Liao. Mingzong sent a state letter (*guoxin* 國信) to Empress Dowager Shǔlǔ in response to her sending envoys earlier in the year.²⁹⁹ During the reign of Emperor Modi, Li Congke (r. 934-937), “a letter, sending to the Khitans” (*yi Qidan shu* 遺契丹書) was drafted to request friendly relations with Liao.³⁰⁰ Even

²⁹⁷ *JWDS* 38:528; *CFYG* 999:11725.

²⁹⁸ *LS* 3:29.

²⁹⁹ *JWDS* 39:534.

³⁰⁰ *ZZTJ* 280:9139.

though a letter was not sent to Liao Taizong due to opposition from some officials, the format of the document proves diplomatic parity.

Management of Captives at the Later Tang Court: The Case of Yelü Bei

However, it cannot be simply concluded that the diplomatic relations between Later Tang and Liao was perpetually equal. Since the two states frequently fought against one another, each side experienced occasional ascendancy over the other. After 926, there was an increase in the frequency of delegations sent. The dispatching of delegations was not only to maintain friendly relations, but also to engage in espionage. When the Later Tang court increasingly sent more envoys to Liao, Liao Taizong asked his officials for an explanation. The officials answered that the Later Tang's persistent visits were due to the strong military power of Liao, so they should refrain from rash actions and observe the envoys.³⁰¹

The Later Tang court's strategic management of captives and refugees resulted in a period when the Later Tang enjoyed tactical ascendancy over the Khitans. After Mingzong ascended the throne, there are several cases showing how captives and refugees were dealt with. In 928, the Khitan general, Tiyin 惕隱, was captured. Mingzong appointed Tiyin and fifty other captives as Palace Guard 親衛, while he executed the remaining six hundred Khitans.³⁰² This most likely served as the motive for the Khitan court to send an envoy to the Tang court later in the same month. In the second month of 929, Khitan General Tunei 禿馁 was executed in the marketplace.³⁰³ An envoy was dispatched from the Khitan court for the requisition of Tunei's

³⁰¹ *LS* 3:29.

³⁰² *ZZTJ* 276:9022-9023; *JWDS* 39:541.

³⁰³ *ZZTJ* 276:9027; *JWDS* 40:548.

dead body, but Mingzong eventually executed him too. There two cases indicate Minzong's hard-line policy against the Khitans in 928 and 929.

The Later Tang court changed its strategy and dropped its hard-line policy against the captives and refugees after 930 when Yelü Bei 耶律倍, also known as Yelü Tuyu, defected to the Later Tang court. Even though he was the heir apparent of Abaoji and the king of Dongdan 東丹 (literally “the East of Khitan”) kingdom, Yelü Bei was deliberately excluded from the throne by his mother, Empress Dowager Shulü.³⁰⁴ He tried to defect to Later Tang at least twice. After his first attempt failed after being restrained by sentinels, the empress dowager simply sent him back to Dongdan without inquiring further about his misconduct. Ultimately, he was able to defect to Luoyang, and coincidentally, Mingzong seems to have actively contacted Yelü Bei to persuade him to defect to Later Tang. After Yelü Bei's defection, Mingzong displayed exceptional respect for him; a banquet was held on a boat and a ceremony appropriate for a Son of Heaven followed. He also received Zhuangzong's royal concubine, Lady He, as a form of preferential treatment.³⁰⁵ The frequency of contact between the states increased after Yelü Bei defected to Later Tang. Detailed information about the gifts or correspondence is unclear, but records show that the surge in contact from the Khitan court was due to Yelü Bei's defection.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ There are three different stories with respect to the succession of Yelü Deguang. According to the Biography of Yelü Bei in *LS*, Yelü Bei spontaneously yielded the throne to his brother, Yelü Deguang, after he realized that it was the Empress Dowager Shulü's intention to install Deguang as the successor. (*LS* 72:1210.) The second version is similar to the first, but Empress Dowager was more involved in terms of controlling the court. Empress Dowager made officials choose the next ruler between her two sons who were sitting on a horse in front of their tents. The officials already knew that she favored her second son so they chose Yelü Deguang. (*ZZTJ* 275:8993.) Another version is from Sima Guang's record on the lost sources of *ZZTJ*. Empress Dowager wanted to install Yelü Bei as the next emperor while dispatching Yelü Deguang to Dongdan. (*ZZTJ* 277:9052-53).

³⁰⁵ In the next year, he received a new name, Dongdan Muhua 東丹慕華, when he was appointed as Military Commissioner of Huaihua 懷化軍節度使. Later, Mingzong bestowed upon him the new name Li Zhanhua 李贊華. (*JWDS* 42:582; *ZZTJ* 277:9057 and 9061.)

³⁰⁶ In the biography of Lü Qi 呂琦, it is mentioned that Empress Dowager Shulü requested a friendly relation because of Yelü Bei. (*XWDS* 56:645.)

Starting from 931, Empress Dowager Shulü sent envoys to the Tang court.³⁰⁷ Also, when envoys were dispatched to the Khitan court, Yelü Bei's letters were conveyed.³⁰⁸ While there was only one case of sending envoys between the Tang and Khitan court between 929 and 930, the frequency of dispatching delegations dramatically increased from 931 onwards.³⁰⁹

Meanwhile, the Khitan court sent envoys to the Later Tang court several times to request their people's repatriation. Mingzong and his officials were well aware of the importance of the captives as useful hostages.

In the beginning, as Sheli Cela and Tiyin of Khitan were both captured by Zhao Dejun, Khitan dispatched envoys several times to ask for [returning] them. When the Emperor discussed it with his officials, Dejun and several [officials] said, "The reason the Khitan did not invade frontiers for several years and asked for peace frequently, is that these people are in the south. [If you] release them, the trouble will arise again immediately in the frontier zones." The Emperor asked about it to Yang Tan, the Governor of Jizhou, and he answered, "Cela, he is the Khitan's lionhearted general. In the past he helped Wang Du conspire to overthrow our state, [but] fortunately, we have captured him. Your Majesty spared them from death and had [mercy] on them many times. To the Khitans, losing them is like losing hands and feet. As he has been in our court for several years, they know the weaknesses and strengths of the Middle Kingdom, so the troubles will become more serious. As soon as they leave the Pass, they will [turn around] and release their arrows to the south. [When that happens], it would be too late to regret." The Emperor refrained [from releasing them].³¹⁰

初，契丹舍利剽刺與惕隱皆為趙德鈞所擒，契丹屢遣使請之。上謀於羣臣，德鈞等皆曰：「契丹所以數年不犯邊、數求和者，以此輩在南故也，縱之則邊患復生。」上以問冀州刺史楊檀，對曰：「剽刺，契丹之驍將，曩助王都謀危社稷，幸而擒之，陛下免其死，為賜已多。契丹失之如喪手足。彼在朝廷數年，知中國虛實，若得歸，為患必深，彼纔出塞，則南向發矢矣，恐悔之無及。」上乃止。

Considering that the conversation took place in 932, one of the generals, Tiyin, had been under the surveillance of the Tang court for over three years after he was captured in 928. After the

³⁰⁷ *WDHY* 29:5-1.

³⁰⁸ *LS* 3:33.

³⁰⁹ See Appendix 3.

³¹⁰ *ZZTJ* 277:9067.

capture of their generals, the Khitan court dispatched official and unofficial envoys at least eight times. Even though the officials, including Zhao Dejun and Yang Tan, voiced their disapproval of the repatriation of the Khitan captives, Mingzong finally decided to release one of the captives, Cegu 則骨, in the fourth month of 932 because he did not want to fully reject the Khitans' request.³¹¹ This conciliatory response may have had a connection to the defector Yelü Bei. A few months ahead of the repatriation of Cegu, Yelü Bei provided a map of Khitan territory to the Later Tang court,³¹² which may have reinforced Mingzong's confidence against the Khitans.

The Later Tang court's strategic management of captives and refugees reached its pinnacle with Yelü Bei. Yelü Bei's presence under the control of Tang court was unique compared to any other refugees or hostages. As the official heir apparent of Abaoji, he was the most valuable hostage in the Tang court. Even though he ran away from his state, the Khitan court never punished his family. Rather, his son was raised as if he was a real son of Taizong (Yelü Deguang, brother of Yelü Bei and the second emperor of Liao), and would eventually succeed his uncle in the future. From Later Tang's perspective, his qualification to serve as a substitute for the Khitan ruler in cases of emergency only increased his importance to the court.³¹³ Although the scheme was not implemented due to its uncertainty of success, such possibilities prove the value Yelü Bei had to the Later Tang.

Nevertheless, harboring defectors always entails a fundamental risk: the possibility of double agents. When Minzong was planning to station Yelü Bei in the south of Henan, his officials disagreed with the plan.³¹⁴ There was always the possibility that Yelü Bei might rebel

³¹¹ *JWDS* 43:591.

³¹² *LS* 4:44-45.

³¹³ *ZZTJ* 280:9151.

³¹⁴ *ZZTJ* 277:9067.

against the Later Tang court. Considering that Yelü Bei and the Khitan court contacted each other with some frequency, he undoubtedly could have provided them with strategic information serving as a Military Governor of Later Tang. In the fourth month of 934 when there was a succession crisis in the Tang court, Yelü Bei encouraged his brother, Taizong, to suppress the usurper, who eventually became the next emperor of Later Tang.³¹⁵ It is not clear if Yelü Bei intended for Taizong to take control over the Tang court, but this case can be seen as his role as an agent with connections to both sides. In the “Genealogy of Imperial Princes” (*huangzi biao* 皇子表) of *LS*, it is recorded that one of Yelü Bei’s notable merits was his secret report of this incident to the Khitan court.³¹⁶ It is unclear whether Taizong’s eventual attack on Later Tang was directly due to Yelü Bei’s secret correspondence, but Yelü Bei’s conveyance of critical information might have affected Taizong’s interference in Later Tang’s domestic affairs.

The Diplomatic Relations between Later Jin and the Khitans

The status quo flipped when Shi Jingtang, the future emperor of Later Jin, asked for extensive military support from Liao Taizong. Shi Jingtang, who was married to Mingzong’s daughter, incurred Modi’s distrust and suspicion.³¹⁷ In a vulnerable position, Shi Jingtang decided to raise an army against the new Later Tang court. His secret pleas to Taizong for military support was the start to the relations between the Later Jin and Liao.

³¹⁵ *LS* 3:36 and 72:1211.

³¹⁶ *LS* 64:973. In Yelü Bei’s merit (*gong* 功) section, it is recorded that “[when Later] Tang’s Li Congke made himself emperor, [Yelü Bei] secretly reported it to Taizong saying, ‘as [Li] Congke associated his sovereign, [you should] suppress [him].’” 唐李從珂自立，密報太宗曰：「從珂弑君，不可不討。」

³¹⁷ When the princess left for Jinyang right after serving drinks to Modi at his birthday banquet, Modi (Li Congke) understood it as sign of rebellion (*ZZTJ* 280:9138-9139).

Among the so-called the Five Dynasties, Later Jin had the most constant dialogue out of the Five Dynasties with the Khitans. There were two distinct phases with regards to the diplomatic relations between the two courts: (1) the lord-vassal relationship during the reign of Shi Jingtang, and (2) the period of shifting relations during the reign of his successor Shi Chonggui, namely emperor Chudi (r. 942-947) of Later Jin.

The Lord-Vassal Relationship

After hearing of Shi Jingtang's rebellion, Modi exterminated Shi Jingtang's core family members³¹⁸ and ordered his military to suppress the rebellion. Desperate, Shi Jingtang reached out for help from the Khitan court and offered two conditions. First, Shi Jingtang would become a "son" of the young Liao emperor. Second, Shi Jingtang would choose to become Taizong's vassal with the additional offering of the Sixteen Prefectures.³¹⁹ Taizong willingly accepted the plea and helped Shi Jingtang overthrow the Later Tang court. Even before his conquest of the Later Tang court, Shi Jingtang was installed as Emperor of Jin by Taizong. From the start of these unequal relations, sources clearly depict the relations as hierarchical. The following passage in *ZZTJ* describes the overall relationship between the two courts.

The Emperor served the Khitan cautiously, offering up a "tributary memorial" (*biao*) as a "servant" (*chen*), calling the Khitan ruler "Father Emperor." Whenever Khitan delegations arrived, the Emperor received the edict while bowing down at an annex palace. Every year, [the Jin court] sent three hundred thousand units of gold and silk, and also conveyed congratulations and condolences and sent out gifts each season and year in which [it seemed like] valuable playthings and rare and precious things were uninterrupted on the road. Even the Heavenly Accepting Empress Dowager, Primacy

³¹⁸ Shi Jingtang's two sons, Shi Chongyin 石重殷, Shi Chongyi 石重裔, were killed, and his brother, Shi Jingde 石敬德, died in prison (*ZZTJ* 280:9145-9146).

³¹⁹ *ZZTJ* 280:9146-9147.

Chief Crown Prince, Prince Wei, two princes of south and north, and many officials including Han Yanhui, Zhao Yanshou all received bribes. If the bribes turned out to be less than they had wished for, they frequently came to chide the Emperor and the Emperor apologized by lowering himself. When the Jin envoys arrived to the Khitan [court], the Khitan [people] behaved haughtily and spoke arrogantly. When the envoys returned, both the court and the people suffered from the shame of hearing it. [However] the Emperor was tireless in serving the Khitan and was not estranged from the Khitan until the end of the reign of the Emperor. However, the amount of gold and silk to be sent was no more than the tax of several counties that [the Jin court] sometimes made the excuse that the subjects were poor and never fulfilled the amount. Afterwards, the Khitan ruler deterred the Emperor from offering up a “tributary memorial” as a “servant” several times and ordered him to call himself the “Son Emperor” in letters, like [conducting] family manners.³²⁰

帝事契丹甚謹，奉表稱臣，謂契丹主為「父皇帝」；每契丹使至，帝於別殿拜受詔敕。歲輸金帛三十萬之外，吉凶慶弔，歲時贈遺，玩好珍異，相繼於道。乃至應天太后、元帥太子、偉王、南、北二王、韓延徽、趙延壽等諸大臣皆有賂，小不如意，輒來責讓，帝常卑辭謝之。晉使者至契丹，契丹驕倨，多不遜語。使者還，以聞，朝野咸以為恥，而帝事之曾無倦意，以是終帝之世與契丹無隙。然所輸金帛不過數縣租賦，往往託以民困，不能滿數。其後契丹主屢止帝上表稱臣，但令為書稱「兒皇帝」，如家人禮。

According to the passage, behind the titular father-son relationship, the Jin court frequently sent tributes, gifts, and bribes to the Liao court. The gifts were not only provided to the members of imperial family, but also to key figures within the court and military. Being treated with the utmost devotion, Taizong allowed Shi Jingtang to call himself “Son Emperor.”

The rhetoric in *LS* further suggests a lord-vassal relationship. In 937, *LS* recorded that the Later Jin court “provided tribute” (*gong*) to the Khitan court.³²¹ This hierarchical relationship can be further observed in later years. Later Jin sent an envoy to “offer up” (*xian*) the map and register documents of the Sixteen Prefectures in 938.³²² In the first month of 939, Later Jin

³²⁰ *ZZTJ* 281:9188-9189.

³²¹ *LS* 3:40. On the same day, it is recorded that tribute was also provided by Liu Zhiyuan (the future emperor of Later Han) and Li Bian (the first emperor of Southern Tang). Considering that the rhetoric used to characterize the actions of all the diplomatic delegations received is unvarying, the Khitan court most likely regarded Later Jin as one among many inferior states.

³²² *LS* 4:44-45.

dispatched envoys to “provide [valuable coins as] tribute” (*gong*). Later in the same month, envoys from Later Jin showed “appreciation” (*xie*) for the exemption of taxes for four of the prefectures.³²³

Unlike *LS* which consistently presented the superior status of Liao, *CFYG* records seem to follow *status quo ante* which represented the superiority of the Chinese dynasties. *JWDS* adopts a more neutral stance. For instance, in the ninth month of 939, a delegation including Zhanmugu 粘木孤 from Liao visited the Later Jin court, providing them with cows, dogs, sheep, jerky, and horses. While *JWDS* records it as a “visit” (*pin*) to “give” (*zhi*), *CFYG* states it as “to offer up” (*xian*).³²⁴ Considering that the status of the Later Jin court was practically that of a vassal-state, it becomes readily apparent that the rhetoric used in *CFYG* did not properly reflect the political reality of the time. However, the frequency of rhetoric conveying superiority in *CFYG* visibly decreased when compared to the frequency of its usage in Later Tang-Khitan records. For example, when a prince arrived at the Later Jin court, *CFYG*’s rhetoric was “to come to visit” (*laipin* 來聘).³²⁵ Similarly, excluding a case in 942, in which envoys brought horses to Later Jin,³²⁶ the compilers of *CFYG* opted to use the phrase “to come to visit” or simply “to visit” (*pin*) for the delegations dispatched in 940, 941, and 942. Diverging from the precedent of rhetoric used between Later Tang and Khitan, *JWDS* chose to use neutral rhetoric in most of the Later Jin cases of delegation exchanges. With the exception of some cases in which detailed terminologies were used for extraordinary situations such as the death of Shi Jingtang and the

³²³ *LS* 4:45.

³²⁴ *CFYG* 972:11424; *JWDS* 78:1032.

³²⁵ *CFYG* 980:11521. (“In the fourth month of the fifth year, the Khitan envoy, Prince of Xinghua, came to visit” 五年四月甲子契丹使興化王來聘.)

³²⁶ *CFYG* 972:11424.

empress dowager,³²⁷ the overwhelming majority of the cases in *JWDS* recount that delegations sent from the Liao court “visited” (*pin*) the Later Jin court.

LS on the other hand shows a dramatic change of rhetoric when compared to precedent. With respect to the Khitans’ relations with Later Liang and Later Tang, when envoys came to the Khitan court, *LS*’s rhetoric was quite restricted. Generally, “to visit” (*pin*) was used, but in special cases, “to give” (*wei* 遺) or “to celebrate” (*he*) replaced “to visit.” However, from 937 to 943, *LS* frequently describes Later Jin’s delegations as “provid[ing] tribute” (*gong*) in addition to “giv[ing]” (*jin*). Sometimes, “to beg” (*qi*) was used to ask for military aid or friendly relations. For example, in the twelfth month of 941, the Later Jin envoys “begged” for the withdrawal of armed forces after the suppression of rebellion.³²⁸ In the seventh month of 944, an envoy was dispatched to the Liao court to “beg” for peace and was imprisoned.³²⁹ Even though Taizong declined the request to form friendly relations several times starting from 944, the Later Jin court must have desperately sought the recovery of the former relationship of parity.

The Transformation Period: Shi Chonggui’s Failure to Change Hierarchical Relations

Despite rhetoric revealing the hierarchical relations between Later Jin and Liao, there indeed was a period when the Jin court attempted to change the *status quo*. After the death of Shi Jingtang, Shi Chonggui succeeded his uncle and became emperor. As the successor, he had to send a

³²⁷ According to *JWDS*, a group of Liao envoys came “to comfort” (*wei* 慰) the Jin court (*JWDS* 81:1071). The Liao court sent the envoys after receiving news of the death of Great Empress Dowager née Liu. It seems that the consolatory delegation was dispatched due to her death. In the eighth month of 942, the Liao envoys came to the Jin court to offer a ritual (*zhiji* 致祭) for the deceased Shi Jingtang (*JWDS* 81:1071).

³²⁸ *LS* 4:50.

³²⁹ *LS* 4:54.

delegation to the Liao court to inform them of the death of the former emperor. At that time, a debate divided the Jin court with respect to sending this news with “tributary memorials” (*biao*) as a “servant” (*chen*) or sending it with a “letter” (*shu*). Jing Yanguang 景延廣 (892-947), who was a hard-liner, advised Shi Chonggui to send a “letter” (*shu*) calling himself “grandson” of Liao Taizong rather than his “servant,” while Li Song 李崧, who was a peacemonger, suggested that he follow Shi Jingtang’s precedent of sending delegations as a “servant.” Eventually, Shi Chonggui sent a “letter” to the Liao court.³³⁰ It is likely that the decision was made a few weeks after the initial debate. According to *LS*, in the seventh month of 942, Taizong received the “letter” (*shu*) from the Jin envoys who came to the court to “show appreciation” (*xie*) for the dispatchment of envoys for Shi Jingtang’s death. Taking into consideration that Later Jin envoys were previously dispatched to inform Liao of Shi Jingtang’s death in the sixth month of 942, the Jin court must have deliberated for a month to purposefully send a “letter.” Taizong immediately sent a delegation to “rebuke” (*rang* 讓) Shi Chonggui.³³¹

Another record from Dunhuang further substantiates Chudi’s efforts to reverse Later Jin’s inferior status at the time. A “posthumous letter” in the form of a manuscript, supposedly sent from Shi Jingtang to Taizong, was first introduced by Giles in 1940 and later fully translated by Lien-sheng Yang in 1947.³³² The letter is divided into two parts. The letter’s supposed writer, Shi Jingtang, writes his journey to become the Jin emperor in the first part of the letter and asks the Khitan Emperor Taizong to take care of his successor, Shi Chonggui, in the second part. There

³³⁰ *ZZTJ* 283:9242-9243.

³³¹ *LS* 4:52.

³³² The manuscript is seen from the International Dunhuang Project website. See “Or.8210/S.4473 Recto,” International Dunhuang Project, accessed July 5, 2022, http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_scroll_h.a4d?uid=16302452048;recnum=9427;index=1. The image is from the same website.

are several aspects to consider before analyzing this letter which was ostensibly written in the name of Shi Jingtang: (1) the letter does not seem to have been written during Shi Jingtang's reign since the terms of succession does not match other sources, and (2) the letter was most likely written by Shi Chonggui.³³³

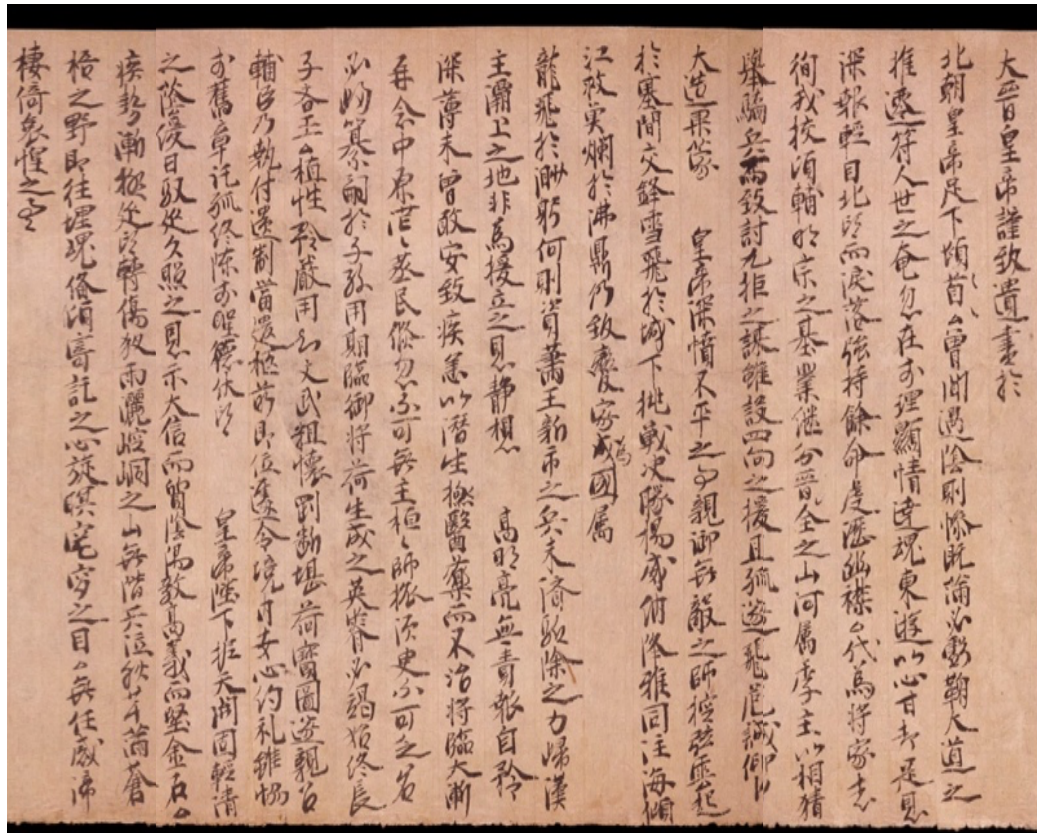


Figure 3: “A Letter from the Jin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor” (S.4473)

³³³ Lien-sheng Yang has translated the document. Lien-sheng Yang assumes that the letter was possibly written after the death of Shi Jingtang by Shi Chonggui. Yang asserts that the document was drafted as a solution to avoid complications between Jin and Liao. Yang mentioned that the letter was written by Chudi, but he did not argue that the letter was related to succession at the time. See Lien-sheng Yang, “A ‘Posthumous Letter’ From the Chin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor in 942,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10 (1947): 418-428.

First, during the reign of Shi Jingtang, no heir apparent or successor was ever chosen. The only suggestion of intentions for succession came from a private consultation the dying Shi Jingtang had with Feng Dao. During the consultation, he intentionally called his young son, Shi Chongrui 石重睿, and allowed Feng Dao to hold him. It is possible that Shi Jingtang was attempting to imitate the historical allusion of Liu Bei's succession to Liu Shan.³³⁴ Sima Guang recorded this moment as a display of Shi Jingtang's intent to turn over the throne to his young son instead of Shi Chonggui.³³⁵ However, this stands in stark contrast to the contents of the posthumous letter which detailed Shi Chonggui's right to succession.

Taking this into account, who else would have the motive to write such a politically charged letter? Shi Chonggui's possible play for the throne can first be seen approximately two weeks before Shi Jingtang's death when Shi Chonggui dispatched envoys "providing tribute" (*gong*) to the Liao court.³³⁶ Even though the purpose of this delegation was not detailed in *LS*, it is possible that Shi Chonggui tried to create a political connection with Taizong before Shi Jingtang died. Furthermore, Shi Chonggui's enthronement was suddenly decided on the day of Shi Jingtang's death with support from hard-liners including Jing Yanguang. At the time, Liu Zhiyuan, who was supposed to assist with political affairs in accordance with Shi Jingtang's edict, was excluded from the court proceedings by Shi Chonggui. With the absence of Liu Zhiyuan, who could have relayed Shi Jingtang's intent to name his son Shi Chongrui as successor, Shi Chonggui eliminated any possible succession rivalry.

³³⁴ When Liu Bei was sick, he requested Zhuge Liang to take care of Liu Shan. See Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 32:891.

³³⁵ *ZZTJ* 283:9237.

³³⁶ *LS* 4:51.

The posthumous letter would have been the most crucial part of Shi Chonggui's masterplan to further solidify his own enthronelement by relaying Shi Jingtang's alleged blessing on his installment. In the letter, Shi Jingtang not only refers to Shi Chonggui as his oldest son, but also creates a foundation for Shi Chonggui's succession by citing his military prowess and civil abilities while also emphasizing his trust in his successor. Although Shi Chonggui's succession has not been questioned by many historians because the records show that Shi Jingtang considered Shi Chonggui as his own son, unless Shi Jingtang decided his successor while he was still alive, I am convinced that the letter was drafted around the sixth month of 942 by Shi Chonggui and his advisors, either right before Shi Jingtang's death or within three days of his death to legitimize Shi Chonggui's succession.

In addition to legitimizing Shi Chonggui's succession, this posthumous letter had a greater importance of showing Shi Chonggui's attempts to change the dynamic of the Jin and Liao hierarchical relationship. Because the Jin court had to send a delegation to Liao right after Shi Jingtang died as a matter of diplomatic protocol, the draft should have been created around three days after Shi Jingtang died. It would be Shi Chonggui's last chance to send the "posthumous letter" to the Liao court in Shi Jingtang's name as Shi Jingtang was allowed to send a "letter" (*shu*) instead of "tributary memorial" (*biao*) to Taizong.³³⁷ Although the letter is in Shi Jingtang's name, Shi Chonggui and his advisors could have found gratification, however small, at their defiance of sending a letter instead of a tributary memorial. Furthermore, the rhetoric in the letter is teeming with mixed expressions of respect and disrespect towards Taizong. In the second line, Shi Chonggui refers to Taizong as the "Emperor of the Northern Dynasty" (*beichao huangdi* 北朝皇帝). Moreover, although the general respectful designation for emperor,

³³⁷ Yang, "A 'Posthumous Letter' From the Chin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor in 942," 427.

“majesty” (*bixia*), was used throughout the majority of the letter, in the greeting, “*zuxia*” 足下, was used. *Zuxia*, usually employed for inferiors or equals, was not used toward superiors.³³⁸ Additionally, even though the letter was written in a respectful tone, Shi Chonggui implies that Liao should not request more repayment.³³⁹ This would have been daring even if it came from Shi Jingtang. Shi Chonggui and his advisors were intentionally trying to change the state of the relationship with this letter.

It is very likely that the letter was not sent to Taizong. There is no record of the sending or receipt of Shi Jingtang’s posthumous letter when Jin dispatched a delegation to Liao to inform them of the death of Shi Jingtang. There are two possible explanations for why the posthumous letter was never sent. A consensus might have not been reached in court with respect to sending either the posthumous letter or another form of report before the sending of envoys to relay the death of Shi Jingtang to Taizong. Or perhaps, Shi Chonggui and the court could have realized that posthumous letter could have created problems for his accession before his new regime was cemented if Taizong realized the letter was fabricated. Nevertheless, although the posthumous letter was not sent, the implication of the letter is clear: it had the dual importance of legitimizing Shi Chonggui’s succession while also attempting to offset the hierarchical relationship.

It is likely that the envoys on the sixteenth day of the sixth month of 942 delivered a “tributary memorial” (*biao*) to inform the Khitans of Shi Jingtang’s death. Shi Chonggui made the decision to officially send a “letter” (*shu*) to Taizong under his own name on the twenty-seventh day of the same month instead of sending the posthumous letter, which promptly caused

³³⁸ Yang Lien-sheng also pointed out that *zuxia* is peculiar because of its use for equals and inferiors. He mentioned that it could be the copyist’s mistake of “majesty” (*bixia* 陛下). See Yang, “A ‘Posthumous Letter’ From the Chin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor in 942,” 418-428.

³³⁹ Shi Jingtang already conferred the Sixteen Prefectures to Taizong when he ascended the throne.

a negative reaction from the Liao court. When Taizong sent an envoy to the Jin court, Taizong reprimanded Shi Chonggui for being installed as emperor without any prior notice to Liao and for using a letter form instead of a tributary memorial.³⁴⁰

After Shi Chonggui's installation, a period of delegation exchanges proceeded but was cut short when Shi Chonggui's hard-line policy became bolder in 943. It is uncertain whether Shi Chonggui or Jing Yanguang started a trade ban between the two courts, but, at Jing Yanguang's request, Shi Chonggui ordered the death of Khitan merchants who resided in Later Jin and confiscated their goods. Qiao Rong, who was a Khitan commercial representative, also seems to have been imprisoned in Later Jin for a while. When he was released from prison, Jing Yanguang clearly delineated Later Jin's perspective of the relationship between the two states.

“Go back and tell [my words] to your ruler. Because the former emperor was installed by the Northern Dynasty, he called himself ‘servant’ and offered up ‘memorials.’ The current emperor was installed by the Middle Kingdom. The reason he capitulated to the Northern Dynasty was that he could not dare to forget the treaty made by the former emperor. As a neighbor, calling [himself] grandson is enough. There is not any reason for him to call [himself] servant. The emperor of Northern Dynasty should not believe Zhao Yanshou's deceitful statement and disdain the Middle Kingdom. The soldiers and horses of the Middle Kingdom, you have witnessed them. If Grandfather gets angry, let him come and fight. Grandson has one hundred thousand polished swords, which are enough to deal with [him]. One day, when [he] gets defeated by Grandson and laughed at by *tianxia*, please do not regret!”³⁴¹

「歸語而主，先帝為北朝所立，故稱臣奉表。今上乃中國所立，所以降志於北朝者，正以不敢忘先帝盟約故耳。為鄰稱孫，足矣，無稱臣之理。北朝皇帝勿信趙延壽誑誘，輕侮中國。中國士馬，爾所目睹。翁怒則來戰，孫有十萬橫磨劍，足以相待。他日為孫所敗，取笑天下，毋悔也！」

³⁴⁰ ZZTJ 283:9243.

³⁴¹ ZZTJ 283:9253; JWDS 88:1144. JWDS's version records the date back to summer of 942 while that of ZZTJ is in the ninth month of 943. Considering that the two courts sent subsequent envoys before the tenth month of 943, ZZTJ's version is more reliable.

In this bold statement, Jin Yanguang not only stated that a grandfather-grandson relationship was the lower bound for any future relationship between the two rulers, but also described Later Jin as a war-prepared state. Furthermore, he criticized Taizong who had a close relationship with Zhao Yanshou, an enemy of the Later Jin imperial family. Before long, Liao conducted a series of attacks against Jin which directly triggered the demise of the state.

The Diplomatic Relations between Later Han and Liao

Liu Zhiyuan took some notable political postures before taking the throne as the first Later Han Emperor. Previously, Liu Zhiyuan strongly advised Shi Jingtang not to serve Liao as a son to a father. This diplomatic strategy reappears when Liu Zhiyuan is officially installed as emperor. Secondly, after being excluded from the court by Shi Chonggui, Liu Zhiyuan chose to observe rather than take an active part in Later Jin politics. When Sang Weihuan 桑維翰 expostulated with Shi Chonggui on his hard-line policy against Liao, Liu Zhiyuan chose not to put opine.³⁴² When Liao invaded, Liu Zhiyuan stationed his forces in Leping 樂平 instead of attacking the Liao military in Hangzhou as ordered.³⁴³ When Shi Chonggui commanded Liu Zhiyuan to congregate his army in Shandong, Liu Zhiyuan was late in his arrival which again exhibits his wait-and-see posture.³⁴⁴

The relationship between Liu Zhiyuan and Liao started in 937, albeit unofficially. *LS*'s records mention that Liu Zhiyuan "provided tribute" (*gong*) to Taizong.³⁴⁵ Owing to the paucity

³⁴² *ZZTJ* 283:9254.

³⁴³ *ZZTJ* 284:9267.

³⁴⁴ Because of Liu Zhiyuan's dubious attitude, Shi Chonggui became suspicious of Liu Zhiyuan. See *ZZTJ* 284:9275.

³⁴⁵ *LS* 3:41.

of other records, the context of the situation is difficult to understand. However, considering that Jin envoys arrived on the same day, it is likely that Liu Zhiyuan decided to separately provide presents to the Liao court. After Later Jin was defeated by Taizong, Liu Zhiyuan sent Wang Jun 王峻 to offer up (*feng*) three “tributary memorials” (*biao*) to Taizong. The first memorial was to celebrate Taizong’s arrival in Bianzhou, the second memorial was to explain why he could not leave his garrison, and the third memorial was to represent Liu Zhiyuan’s promise to provide “tribute” (貢物 *gongwu*) in the future. In response to Liu Zhiyuan’s “tribute,” Taizong reciprocated by bestowing (*ci*) an edict with a wooden cane. According to the “foreign law” (*hufa*), a wooden cane was given to only prestigious lieges. Only Prince of Wei 偉王 received it hitherto, as he was the uncle of a Liao emperor. Later, Taizong also added “son” (*er*), in front of Liu Zhiyuan’s name in a (edict) letter.³⁴⁶ In the same month, Liu Zhiyuan sent an envoy to Taizong to “offer up” (*xian*) unique silk and good horses. Yet it is important to note that although Liu Zhiyuan ostensibly pursued a lord-vassal relationship, he was not fully subservient to Liao either. A question Taizong posed to Liu Zhiyuan, “you serve neither the northern state or the southern state. What are you waiting for?” 「汝不事南朝，又不事北朝，意欲何所俟邪？」, explicitly reveals Zhiyuan’s wait-and-see attitude.³⁴⁷

A month after sending envoys to Taizong, Liu Zhiyuan installed himself as emperor. He proclaimed himself emperor of Later Jin and reused Shi Jingtang’s past reign name, *tianfu*. In the sixth month of 947, he eventually entered Luoyang and changed his state name to Han. However, after he became emperor, there ceased to be an official friendly relationship between Later Han and Taizong. A series of incidents, including the rebellions of military governors and the sudden

³⁴⁶ ZZTJ 286:9335-9336; JWDS 11:1324. In JWDS, instead of *hufa*, *fanfa* 蕃法 was used. I translate both *hufa* and *fanfa* as “foreign law.”

³⁴⁷ ZZTJ 286: 9336.

death of Taizong, forced the Liao military to draw back to the north. Only after the successor of Taizong, Yelü Wuyu (Emperor Shizong of Liao), rose to power did Liao attempt to reestablish friendly relations with Later Han. Unfortunately, a friendly relationship was not established between these two states, due to the quick demise of Later Han.³⁴⁸

The Diplomatic Relations between Later Zhou and Liao

The relationship between Later Zhou and Liao was first initiated when Shizong of Liao sent envoys to the Later Han court. At the time of their arrival, the Central Plain was already under the control Guo Wei 郭威 (r. 951-954), who had just become the emperor of Later Zhou. The Military Governor of Anguo 安國節度使, Liu Ci 劉詞, guided the envoys to the capital city where Guo Wei was at the time. Guo Wei sent an envoy to give Shizong a golden bowl and jade belt.³⁴⁹ In the second month of 951, reciprocating Guo Wei's gifts, Shizong sent an envoy to the Later Zhou court.³⁵⁰ Later in the same month, the Later Zhou court dispatched a delegation to Liao.³⁵¹

Even though both states exchanged delegations, their hopes of amicable relations were quickly dashed, even boiling over into a state of hostility. When the Later Zhou court dispatched envoys with a letter (*shu*) to Liao, Shizong detained them for “violating propriety.”³⁵² Despite this show of aggression, their relationship was not severed immediately. Shizong dispatched an

³⁴⁸ See Appendix 3. There was only one attempt of sending envoys from Liao to Later Han. However, the Later Han had already fallen by the time the envoys arrived. *ZZTJ* 290:9452.

³⁴⁹ *ZZTJ* 290:9452.

³⁵⁰ *WDHY* 29:9-1; *CFYG* 980:11522; *JWDS* 111:1468; *XWDS* 11:112; *LS* 5:65; *ZZTJ* 290: 5456.

³⁵¹ *WDHY* 29:9-1; *ZZTJ* 290:9457.

³⁵² *LS* 5:66.

envoy with bluish jade, fourteen horses, and a gold and silver plated rein and saddle in the fourth month of 951.³⁵³ Yet, in the fifth month of same year, the Later Zhou envoys, Hua Guangyi 華光裔 and Yao Hanying, were detained in Liao because of the friendly relations between Liao and Northern Han, a regime which was established by a brother of Liu Zhiyuan.³⁵⁴ The fleeting courteous relationship established in the beginning between Liao and Later Zhou deteriorated into a somewhat cordial relationship which was seldomly maintained.

It is likely that from the beginning, Liao expected a tributary relation with the Later Zhou court. Since Shi Chonggui of Later Jin eventually wound up designating himself as grandson and eventually as servant after Liao conquered Later Jin, Shizong must have wanted to maintain the former hierarchical relationship. However, Later Zhou seemed to have never wanted to play subservience to Liao. Zhou's disdain for hierarchical relations is further shown in sources *JWDS*, *WDHY*, and *CFYG*, where disrespectful rhetoric was used to characterize the visits of the Liao envoys. When Liao envoys came to Later Zhou, *LS* states the envoys "gave" (*zhi*) good horses while *JWDS*, *WDHY*, and *CFYG* used "to offer up" (*xian*). The same rhetoric was used in *WDHY* when Shiliu came to the Later Zhou court.³⁵⁵ When the Liao envoys came to the court, the Zhou emperor "bestowed" (*ci*) valuable goods to them. In comparison to these sources, *LS* consistently uses neutral rhetoric. For example, the Later Zhou envoys "visited" (*pin*) Liao in the sixth and eighth months in 957.³⁵⁶

From the letters exchanged between the brothers Li Huan 李澣 and Li Tao 李濤, it is clear that Liao's domestic situation could have shaped Later Zhou's opinion of Liao at the

³⁵³ *WDHY* 29:9-1.

³⁵⁴ *WDHY* 29:9-1; *JWDS* 111:1472; *CFYG* 980:11522; *ZZTJ* 290:9460.

³⁵⁵ *CFYG* 980:11522.

³⁵⁶ *LS* 6:74.

time.³⁵⁷ Li Huan, who submitted to the Liao court after Later Jin collapsed, tried to convince Xiao Haizhen 蕭海真, one of the Military Governors of Liao, to defect to the Later Zhou court. Xiao Haizhen, whose sister was married to the deceased Emperor Shizong, willingly accepted the offer.³⁵⁸ From Li Huan's report, we can see his request to the "emperor of Southern Dynasty" (*nanchao huangdi* 南朝皇帝) to raise a military.³⁵⁹ In 952, Li Huan sent a letter to his brother, Li Tao, who was then advisor to the heir apparent (*taizi binke* 太子賓客) in the Later Zhou court. The letter read:

“The ruler of the Khitans is childish and dull, and [he only] focuses on enjoying feasts and playing. [He] does not have any grand ambition that would make him equal in comparison to the previous ones. If the [Later Zhou] court wants to use a military, [they] will certainly win. If not, and what they want is to have friendly relations, it will be a success. Either option will be achieved in compliance with an expeditious [decision]. In another day, finally they will not be able to help the people of Hedong (Northern Han).”
360

「契丹主童駿，專事宴遊，無遠志，非前人之比，朝廷若能用兵，必克；不然，與和，必得。二者皆利於速，度其情勢，他日終不能力助河東者也。」

Even though Xiao Haizhen's defection to the Later Zhou court was never realized, through this incident, four observations can be made about the political situations of the two states: (1) The new Liao leader's rulership was questioned after the turbulent succession process; (2) through Xiao Haizhen's designation of the Later Zhou emperor as "the emperor of Southern Dynasty," Later Zhou's perception of Liao as a counterpart is apparent; (3) the Later Zhou court had the option of choosing between war and peace; and (4) Liao had supported the Northern Han in

³⁵⁷ For the detailed story of Li Huan, see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, 150-158.

³⁵⁸ Xiao Haizhen's motivation for defection is not revealed, but it could be related to the death of Shizong. Standen explains that after the unexpected death of Shizong, he might have been threatened as a member of the consort's family. See Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, 153.

³⁵⁹ *Quan Tang wen* 861:9033.

³⁶⁰ *ZZTJ* 290:9479.

confronting Later Zhou.³⁶¹ Afterwards, the two states did not exchange official envoys for at least five years, and Liao continued to support Northern Han in attacking Later Zhou before the latter's collapse.

The Rhetoric in the New History of Five Dynasties

Unlike the other sources, *XWDS*'s rhetoric with regards to Liao's diplomatic relations with the Five Dynasties was static and uniform. In most cases, Ouyang Xiu, the compiler of *XWDS*, simply uses "to come" (*lai*) to characterize the visits of Khitan delegations. For instance, when Abaoji sent horses to Later Tang in 926, it is recorded in *JWDS* that "Abaoji sent envoys to provide horses as tribute (*gong*)" while *XWDS* states that "Khitan's envoy Meilao Xieli came (*lai*).” Later in the seventh month of the same year, *JWDS* records that "Khitan and Parhae kingdom sent envoys to pay tribute (*gong*)" while *XWDS* states that "Khitan's envoy Meilao Shugu came and Parhae's envoy, Da Zhaozuo, came (*lai*).” *Gong* and the colorful rhetoric other "Chinese" sources used to represent the hierarchical relation was replaced with simply "*lai*" in *XWDS*. However, the annotations in *XWDS* betray an undertone which sharply differ from the posture of neutrality shown by the unwavering use of the word *lai*. According to the annotation in *XWDS* regarding the Khitan's sending of envoys,

When barbarians (*yidi*) come, it is not referred to as "attending audience" (*chao*) because they are not expected to have such ritual protocols. It is not referred to as "providing tribute" (*gong*) because their products are not valued. This is reason why [their arrivals were recorded as] "to come" in this book. In the chaotic times of Five Dynasties, it is apparent that they came frequently. From this we can see that whether or not the barbarians came did not depend on [times of] good rule or chaos. That they came frequently during times of chaos means that their visits are not worthy to be valued.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Here, Hedong represents Northern Han.

³⁶² *XWDS* 2:13.

夷狄來，不言朝，不責其禮；不言貢，不貴其物。故書曰來。五代亂世，著其屢來，以見夷狄之來不來，不因治亂。而亂世屢來，不足貴也。

Essentially, this annotation designates the Khitans as “barbarians” (*yidi*) whose meeting with emperors should not be treated as “attending audience” and whose presents were not valuable enough to provide meaningful tribute to the Five Dynasties. The annotator of *XWDS*, Xu Wudang 徐無黨, completely belittles the “barbarian” delegations during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. Considering that Xu Wudang was a student of Ouyang Xiu, he must have understood the compiler’s true thoughts and intentions.³⁶³ Is Ouyang Xiu’s simplification of rhetoric consistent throughout his work, and if not, does his rhetoric truly portray his perspective of the relationship?

Ouyang Xiu’s *XWDS* is not only known for its concise Confucian style of writing, but also for its use of *verbatim ac literatim*. He was an expert in distinguishing similar characters and applying them towards appropriate situations. Zhao Yi 趙翼, one of the key historians of the Qing dynasty and acclaimed for being one of the scholars of “evidential scholarship” 考證學, dealt specifically with the characteristics of *XWDS* in his book, *Notes on the Twenty-Two Dynastic Histories* 廿二史劄記. One of Zhao Yi’s notes titled “Ouyang Xiu’s Style of Writing was Strict” 歐史書法謹嚴 is especially helpful for clarity. One of the many examples Zhao Yi provided was Ouyang Xiu’s distinguishing of characters meaning “attack.” Ouyang Xiu used *gong* 攻 for mutual attacks; *fa* 伐 when a bigger state attacked a smaller one; *tao* 討 when one

³⁶³ Davis noted in “introduction” of his translation of *XWDS*. See Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, xlvii.

attacked the other to punish; and *zheng* 征 when an emperor participated in the battle.³⁶⁴ This further raises the question, what would drive Ouyang Xiu, known for his prudent selection of characters, to oversimplify the rhetoric used to denote the relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao?

Although he avoided using “to provide tribute” or “tribute” in the Basic Annals, Ouyang Xiu frequently used “to attend audience with tribute” (*chaogong* 朝貢) in the Biographies of “Four Barbarians” (*siyi liezhuan* 四夷列傳), which is a combination of two words he avoided using for “barbarians” (*yidi*). According to the monograph of Tuhun 吐渾, Tuhun “attended audience with tribute” in the reign of Shi Jingtang and continued doing so during the Later Jin and Later Han dynasties.³⁶⁵ Also, the Uyghurs 回鶻 and Koryŏ 高麗 respectively “attended audience with tribute” in the Central Plain throughout the Five Dynasties period.³⁶⁶ The cases of Dangxiang 党項, Tujue 突厥, Parhae 渤海, Shilla 新羅, Heshui Mohe 黑水靺鞨 and Nanzhao 南詔蠻 were the same.³⁶⁷ In addition, there are cases in which he used “to offer up” (*xian*). During the reign of Mingzong, a Uyghur tutuq came to the court to “offer up” a white peregrine.³⁶⁸ Ganzhou Uyghurs 甘州回鶻 “offered up” jade during the reign of Chai Rong 柴榮.³⁶⁹ These cases imply that either Xu Wudang’s annotation was misguided, or Ouyang Xiu had some other motivation in simplifying the rhetoric. I argue that the latter is more convincing

³⁶⁴ Zhao Yi 趙翼, *Nian ershi zhaji jiao zheng* 廿二史劄記校證, ed. Wang Shumin 王樹民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 21:290. Korean translated version: *Isip-isa ch'agi*, vol. 5, Haksul myŏngjŏ pŏnyŏk ch'ongsŏ. Tongyang p'yŏn 120-124, Sŏul-si: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2009, 55-62).

³⁶⁵ *XWDS* 74:910-911.

³⁶⁶ *XWDS* 74:916 and 919.

³⁶⁷ *XWDS* 74:912, 913, 920, and 921.

³⁶⁸ *XWDS* 6:65; 74:916. Finally, Mingzong set free the peregrine. On the contrary, *JWDS* says that they “gave” (*jin*) the peregrine. (*JWDS* 138:1842.)

³⁶⁹ *XWDS* 12:123.

because although varying rhetoric, including *chaogong*, *xian*, and *lai*, were used for other ethnic groups, *gong* was never used for only a certain group: the Khitans.

In the eleventh century, the Song court was unable to attain superiority in their relationship with Liao. Starting from the creation of the Covenant of Chanyuan (1005), Song and Liao settled on a mutually equal relationship. The use of derogatory rhetoric was condemned in order to maintain their friendly relationship. For example, Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 997-1022) of Song changed previous military post names such as “Threatening the Caitiffs” (*weilu* 威虜) to “Broadening Faith” (*guangxin* 廣信), “Pacifying Barbarians” (*jingrong* 靜戎) to “Peaceful Silence” (*ansu* 安肅), and “Breaking up the Caitiffs” (*polu* 破虜) to “Faith and Peace” (*xin'an* 信安) after the covenant was declared.³⁷⁰ Curbing the use of hierarchical rhetoric between the two states shows that both the covenant and the established diplomatic relations between equals were respected.

However, this peace outlined out by the Covenant of Chanyuan was only guaranteed when Song paid 200,000 bolts of silk and 100,000 *taels* of silver annually, while Liao paid nothing.³⁷¹ With this unbalanced condition, having equal relations with these “barbarians” must have been humiliating to the Song people and historians, who believed in the hierarchical relationship between the Han and the “barbarians.” Even though derogatory rhetoric was avoided in official documents, the Song literati covertly or sometimes explicitly degraded Liao as “barbarians” in their private writings. Ouyang Xiu must have been aware of the situation. His

³⁷⁰ Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 58:1301. See Tao Jing-shen, “Barbarians or Northerner: Northern Sung Images of the Khitan,” in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 70.

³⁷¹ *QDGZ* 20:189-190.

compilation of *XWDS* should be understood as an extension of ethno-superior publications. He added three volumes of appendices at the end of the whole book to convey the importance of the “barbarians,” and out of the three volumes, two are dedicated to the Khitans including the pre-dynastic era of Liao. The crucial difference between *XWDS* and *JWDS* lies with the designation of the Khitans. While *JWDS* inserted the history of the Khitans in the Biographies of Foreign States (*waiguo liezhuan* 外國列傳), *XWDS* inserted their history into the Biographies of “Four Barbarians”.

Manipulating the diplomatic rhetoric pertaining to the Khitans while also degrading them in the appendices could have been due to either or both of these two factors. First, it could have been a reflection of the reality brought around by the Covenant of Chanyuan. Considering that pejorative terms were officially changed after the covenant, Ouyang Xiu must have been aware of this attempt to avoid using sensitive terms. This phenomenon is also seen in *ZZTJ*. Sima Guang rarely used *gong* in the relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao. Second, since the Song dynasty had to frame the dynasty as the legitimate successor of the Five Dynasties as well as the Tang dynasty, the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao must have been a sensitive topic to the Song court. Song was essentially forced to officially have equal relations with Liao, with the Song court fully aware that Liao had equal or sometimes superior relations to some of the Five Dynasties. Recording their predecessors as inferior in their relationship with the “barbarians” ran counter to their ideological superiority to Liao. Likewise, creating a precedent of unequal relations would implicitly acknowledge the humiliation of the Song-Liao compromise and deflate the dignity of Song. Both cases could have undermined Song’s status as a legitimate successor to the sequential Five Dynasties as well as preventing them from portraying themselves as having nominal parity with Liao.

Ironically, Ouyang Xiu's compilation of *XWDS* provoked the recording and attachment of Song's earlier history to the Liao "State History" (*guoshi* 國史). It is obvious that the Liao court realized Ouyang Xiu's intention to belittle the Khitans in earlier history. During the reign of Daozong 道宗 (r. 1055-1101), Liu Hui 劉輝, whose origin is Han, mentioned Ouyang Xiu's *XWDS* in order to urge the emperor to record the earlier history of the Song imperial family.

In the second year of Shoulong (1096), [Liu Hui] again sent a letter to the emperor saying: "[When] Ouyang Xiu of Song compiled the history of Five Dynasties, he attached our dynasty to [the history of] Four Barbarians, where he absurdly added disparagement. In addition, the Song people depended on the generosity of our dynasty that [we] have promised the friendly relation and practiced brotherly manners. These days, however, they ordered a courtier to compile a history absurdly and took no heed of their duties toward us. [Your] servant requests [your majesty] to record Zhao family's early story with details attached to our State History." The Emperor became delighted after hearing this, so [he] appointed [Liu Hui] as the Vice Director of the Ministry of Rituals.³⁷²

壽隆二年，復上書曰：「宋歐陽修編五代史，附我朝於四夷，妄加貶訾。且宋人賴我朝寬大，許通和好，得盡兄弟之禮。今反令臣下妄意作史，恬不經意。臣請以趙氏初起事蹟，詳附國史。」上嘉其言，遷禮部郎中。

Because the detailed information of the "State History" is unknown, it is difficult to conclude whether the earlier history of the Song dynasty was ever compiled. However, considering that "Veritable Records of Imperial Dynasty" was compiled during the following reign of Tianzuodi 天祚帝 (r.1101-1125), it is possible that Ouyang Xiu's *XWDS* induced Liao to portray their perspective in their own historical compilation.

Conclusion

³⁷² *LS* 104:1455-1456.

This chapter analyzed the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao based on rhetoric used in primary source material. Each of the sequential dynasties maintained a different diplomatic relationship with the Khitans. The source *LS* was essential in contributing contrasting rhetoric to other sources by reflecting the Khitans' perspective on the hierarchical diplomatic relations of the time.

When Abaoji rose to power in 907, the Khitans were still merely a tribal confederation. Only after 916, when Abaoji was re-established as the absolute emperor, can the Khitans be considered as an empire. Before 916, the Later Liang-Khitan relationship was generally hierarchical as *CFYG*, *JWDS*, and *WDHY* used *gong* for the reception of Khitan envoys, while *LS* used *pin* when the Later Liang delegations came. However, after 916, the relationship becomes difficult to interpret because there are only records of Later Liang sending envoys to the Khitans.

Even though Later Tang and the Khitans experienced a tumultuous relationship with cyclical betrayal and alliance, the two courts broadly maintained brotherly relations. While the Khitans' occasional invasions into Tang frontiers tested the relationship between the two states, the amicable diplomatic relations were nonetheless sustained until Later Tang fell. These relations were partially possible due to Mingzong's strategic management of refugees and captives. Capturing and imprisoning important Khitan figures for three years, the Later Tang court was able to enjoy a hiatus from war. In addition, Mingzong not only actively persuaded Abaoji's once legitimate successor, Yelü Bei, to defect to the Tang court, but also showed him great generosity by appointing him as Military Governor and bestowing the imperial surname upon him. As to the rhetoric in the sources, *LS* consistently used terms of equal diplomatic relations, while *WDHY*, *CFYG* and *JWDS* assert Later Tang's superiority. Of course, while both Later Tang and the Khitan experienced situational ascendancy, broadly, the diplomatic relations

between the two states were one of parity. The two courts exchanged letter-format documents denoting equal status and called each other “brother” or “friend” (Abaoji’s term: *chaoding*), suggesting a close brotherly relationship.

The death of Yelü Bei marked the end to the Later Tang court’s captive strategy and erased any potential leverage the Later Jin court had over the Khitans. The diplomatic relations between Later Jin and Liao were unequal from the start as Shi Jingtang was desperate to receive military aid from Taizong. Liao was placed in a superior position with Shi Jingtang not only offered up the Sixteen Prefectures to Taizong, but also called himself the inferior “Son Emperor,” despite being approximately ten years older than Taizong. The rhetoric in *LS* properly reflects this unequal relationship. *LS* frequently used *gong* or sometimes *qi* to characterize the arrival of Jin delegations. Unlike the neutral rhetoric in *JWDS*, the rhetoric in *WDHY* and *CFYG* seem to follow the *status quo ante*. After Shi Chonggui, Shi Jingtang’s nephew, took the throne, he attempted to change the hierarchical relationship by refusing to send a “tributary memorial” as his first diplomatic correspondence with Liao and instead sent a “letter” to Taizong, which in turn made Taizong furious. Shi Chonggui’s hard-line policy spelled the demise of Later Jin.

Later Han had no official relationship with Liao. Before Liu Zhiyuan ascended the throne, he personally dispatched envoys to Taizong several times. According to *JWDS*, *QDGZ*, and *ZZTJ*, before his installation as emperor of Later Han, Liu Zhiyuan “offered up” three “tributary memorials” (*biao*) to Taizong. Taizong bestowed (*ci*) a wooden cane upon him and called him “son.” Because there were no instances of official diplomatic relations after Liu Zhiyuan ascended the throne, it is difficult to gauge the balance of their relationship. Later Zhou’s case is quite similar to Later Han’s. After Guo Wei became the emperor of Zhou, the two courts sent delegations for a while, but owing to the ensuing battles between the two states, a

hierarchical relationship was never fully established. While *LS* consistently used neutral rhetoric, *JWDS*, *WDHY*, and *CFYG* used hierarchical rhetoric. However, considering that the Later Zhou envoys were detained by Liao Shizong because they brought a letter (*shu*) instead of “tributary memorials” (*biao*) and Later Zhou never provided “tributary memorial,” both Later Zhou and Liao must have expected different relations; Liao expected themselves to be the superior party in the relationship and Later Zhou expected a relationship of parity at bare minimum.

I also explored the reason why *XWDS* simply repeated the same rhetoric, “to come” (*lai*), in contrast to the other Chinese sources. This phenomenon is most likely linked to Song being the legitimate successor of not only Tang, but also the Five Dynasties. When Ouyang Xiu compiled the history of the Five Dynasties, Song was nominally on parity with Liao, due to the Covenant of Chanyuan. Accepting the *realpolitik* of the Five Dynasties period must have been unbearable to the Song literati. If Liao was recorded to have been historically on par or superior to any of the Five Dynasties in the Middle Kingdom, Song’s legitimacy would weaken. Through the manipulation of the *etic* and *emic* sources, Ouyang Xiu attempted to conceal the Five Dynasties’, and therefore the Song’s, disadvantages while upholding the Covenant of Chanyuan. By comparing Ouyang Xiu’s compilation to other sources, the diplomacy of the time becomes more easily comprehensible.

To conclude, among the Five Dynasties, only the diplomatic relations between Later Tang and Khitan can be considered to have been one of parity. Parity was generally maintained generation to generation throughout the rise and fall of Later Tang. Historians have given most of their attention to the relationship between Song and Liao due in part to the significance of the Covenant of Chanyuan, which contractually secured an equal relationship between Song and the Liao, consequentially giving birth to the well-established Sino-Inner Asian diplomatic concept of

“two sons of heaven.” According to Wang Gungwu, the covenant was “the nearest thing to equality in Chinese history until modern times.”³⁷³ However, a closer examination of the diplomatic relations between Later Tang and Liao proves their covenant to be a legitimate precedent to the Covenant of Chanyuan virtually a century prior. Like the Sino-Tibetan Treaty of 821, there was no requirement of money or material exchange, and like the Covenant of Chanyuan, the two states recognized each other of the same world with the emperors calling each other “Northern emperor” and “Southern emperor.” Thus, I argue that the establishment of a relationship of parity between the Sino-Inner Asian “two sons of heaven” under the same *tianxia* predated Song during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period.

³⁷³ See Wang Gungwu, “The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire” in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 55.

Chapter 4. When the “Middle Kingdom” Diminished: The Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms

Introduction

The first historical reference to the “Middle Kingdom” (Zhongguo) can be found on a bronze vessel dating from the Western Zhou dynasty (1045-776 BCE) period when Western Zhou used the terminology as a state name most likely extending all the way back to the ancient times. Over time, other than being utilized as a dynastic or state name, the “Middle Kingdom” came to take on other meanings: territory, political entity, people, ethnicity, culture, and civilization. Sometimes, the Middle Kingdom was used interchangeably with a variety of terminologies; mostly the “Central Plain” or “zhongxia” 中夏 in a territorial dimension; “Han” 漢 for ethnicity; and “Hua” 華, “zhonghua” 中華 or “huaxia” 華夏 for culture. I consider the “Middle Kingdom” to be a flexible concept with different interpretations and connotations with the passage of time. Accordingly, I recognize that the span of the “Middle Kingdom” is dependent on these interpretations.

Many scholars have studied the “Middle Kingdom” in the broader context without distinguishing it from “China,” which neither appreciates the underlying complexity of the term nor establishes a clear distinction with the modern concept of nation-state. Purposely, in this chapter, I distinguish the “Middle Kingdom” from “China” and solely focus on the “Middle Kingdom” of the medieval world. This chapter consists of two parts: (1) a study of the “Middle Kingdom” in periods past, and (2) an examination of the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms to ultimately prove the diminishing of the “Middle Kingdom.”

To lay the foundations for my argument of the contraction of the Middle Kingdom during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, I delve into the Middle Kingdom of periods prior. I examine the interpretation of the “Middle Kingdom” from earlier times in the medieval period, specifically the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386-589) and Tang Dynasty (618-907) periods, respectively. I first start with a brief, yet sweeping study of the concept and extent of the “Middle Kingdom” during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period as it was a time in medieval “Chinese” history that, similarly to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, exhibited sharp division amongst multiple states. The Northern and Southern Dynasties period was also a time when the conceptualization of the “Middle Kingdom” was vital to both the northern and southern states, hinging the legitimation of their states to their ties to the “Middle Kingdom.” These dynasties eventually use the differing concepts of the “Middle Kingdom” as tools to characterize themselves and each other. With a thorough examination of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, I attempt to head off two specific concerns that I predict will most frequently be questioned when I argue for the diminishing of the Middle Kingdom. The first question is in connection to many historians considering the “Middle Kingdom” to mean or have a correlation with the “Central Plain,” the current Henan region. This exercise will bring clarity to the flexibility of the concept of the “Middle Kingdom” and contend that the Central Plain is not always a permanent and essential characteristic of the “Middle Kingdom.” Secondly, I will respond to whether multiple states can be considered the Middle Kingdom at the same time. Next, I probe how the concept of the “Middle Kingdom” changed during the Tang dynasty, after nearly four hundred years of division. This study is important in order not only to gauge the concept, but also to emphasize that although the concept might have changed, the breadth of the Middle Kingdom stayed essentially static. This span of the Middle Kingdom over these two

periods sets the stage for the diminishing of the Middle Kingdom in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period.

To shed light on the “Middle Kingdom” of the tenth century, I start by examining the diplomatic ties between the Five Dynasties and each of its surrounding states. I pay particular attention to how the rulers of the Five Dynasties estranged themselves from neighboring states through the diplomatic investitures of each of their respective rulers. Then I explore the concept of the “Middle Kingdom” during this period to ascertain that the extent of the Middle Kingdom was contained to the territory and sovereignty of the Five Dynasties. On the surface, the Five Dynasties utilized investitures to reinforce their own legitimation and pursue the unification of the Middle Kingdom. But in reality, they indirectly contributed to the validation of divisions among the states and ironically furnished surrounding states with their own respective autonomies, eventually leading to the shrinking of the tenth century “Middle Kingdom.” Finally, I conclude by underscoring the logical paradox of Ouyang Xiu’s period designation, the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period.³⁷⁴

A Comparable Time: A Study of the Northern and Southern Dynasties Period (420 – 589)

Northern Perspectives

According to *History of Northern Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書), when Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471-499) of Northern Wei 北魏 was contemplating the conquest of the Southern Qi dynasty, his Director of

³⁷⁴ Parts of chapter four is accepted and expected to be published in 2023. Soojung Han, “Defining Identities: Notes on Ethnic Terminologies in the Chinese Medieval World (304-960 CE),” in *Ethnic Terminologies in Eurasian Perspective*, eds. Walter Pohl, Cinzia Grifoni, and Sophie Gruber (Leiden: Brill, 2023, Forthcoming).

the Central Secretariat 中書令, Gao Lü 高閭 (d. 502), dissuaded him from doing so. This dialogue between Emperor Xiaowen and Gao Lü presents Gao Lü's perception of the Middle Kingdom which becomes the basis for his dissent.

[Gao] Lü said, "On his deathbed, Sima Xiangru was regretful that he did not see the Feng and Shan Sacrifices (*fengshan* 封禪). Now, even though [beyond] the border of Jiangnan does not submit to [us] and the minor enemy has not been annihilated, the land of the Middle Prefecture (*zhongzhou* 中州) is already mostly pacified. How come, in this time of brightness and wisdom of your reign, you skip the grand ceremony? [Even] when Duke Huan of Qi defeated feudal lords, he all the more wanted to conduct the Feng and Shan Sacrifices. Yet, how [could you as] emperor [not] practice it?" Gaozu (Emperor Xiaowen) said, "That is why Duke Huan bowed down to Guanzhong. Furthermore, since Jingzhou and Yangzhou have not been unified yet, how can I do as you say?" [Gao] Lü said, "All the famous officials of the Han dynasty did not think of Jiangnan as the Middle Kingdom. In addition, the border of the Three Dynasties was not far-flung (to reach Jiangnan)." Gaozu said, "As Huaihai is Yangzhou, and the south of Jing and Heng is Jingzhou, aren't those regions close to the Middle Kingdom?"³⁷⁵

閭曰：「司馬相如臨終恨不見封禪。今雖江介不賓，小賊未殄，然中州之地，略亦盡平，豈可於聖明之辰，而闕盛禮。齊桓公霸諸侯，猶欲封禪，而況萬乘。」高祖曰：「由此桓公屈於管仲。荊揚未一，豈得如卿言也。」閭曰：「漢之名臣，皆不以江南為中國。且三代之境，亦不能遠。」高祖曰：「淮海惟揚州，荊及衡陽惟荊州，此非近中國乎？」

In this conversation, Gao Lü can be seen encouraging Emperor Xiaowen to practice the Feng and Shan Sacrifices, which was an official rite practiced by legitimate emperors of the Middle Kingdom to pay homage to heaven and earth. However, Emperor Xiaowen seems unwilling to conduct the sacrifices due to the "South of River" (Jiangnan 江南) region not yet being conquered. When Emperor Xiaowen reveals his intent to pacify the Jingzhou and Yangzhou area before giving consideration to the sacrifices, Gao Lü attempts to persuade the emperor that the conquest of the Jiangnan region is not necessary because the region is not within the boundaries

³⁷⁵ This conversation also appears in the *History of Northern Dynasties*. See *Bei shi* 34:1259. As *Wei shu* is compiled earlier than *Bei shi*, I use *Wei shu*'s version. See *Wei shu* 54:1208.

of Han officials' notion of the Middle Kingdom as well as the borders of the ancient Three Dynasties, Xia 夏, Shang 商, and Zhou 周. By treating the Jiangnan region as terrain outside the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom, Gao Lü conceptually separates it from the Middle Kingdom and in turn addresses Emperor Xiaowen's concerns about his not having conquered Jingzhou and Yangzhou. *History of Northern Dynasties (Bei shi)* slightly differs from *Wei shu*'s version and describes Gao Lü directly disregarding Jiangnan as a part of the Middle Kingdom.³⁷⁶ At the end of this dialogue, Emperor Xiaowen attempts to tie Jingzhou and Yangzhou to the Middle Kingdom by stating that they are geographically "close" to the Middle Kingdom. His statement is a reluctant admittance that he recognizes that those two regions are not a part of the Middle Kingdom.

Gao Lü's notion of the Middle Kingdom is restricted to the northern region where the Northern Wei dynasty resides. Therefore, theoretically the occupation of the Jiangnan region is irrelevant to the unification plans. Instead, the term "Middle Prefecture" 中州 was substituted for the Middle Kingdom in the beginning of the dialogue. If Gao Lü's definition of the Middle Kingdom's boundaries is limited to the northern region, what happens when this northern dynasty is divided into two?

After the Northern Wei dynasty was divided into Eastern Wei 東魏 (534-550) and Western Wei 西魏 (535-557), the two states competed with one another for the title of true legitimate successor of Northern Wei. The territory under the rule of Eastern Wei included Ye 鄴, the political and military hub, and Luoyang 洛陽, where Emperor Xiaowen transferred the capital. On the other hand, Western Wei made Chang'an 長安 its capital city. Even though both

³⁷⁶ *Bei shi* 34:1259.

states had control over regions symbolically significant to the previous Northern Wei dynasty, most of the modern Henan 河南 area, known as the Central Plain, was part of Eastern Wei's territory. Gao Lü's concept of the Middle Kingdom, which is limited to the Central Plain region, runs into complications when applied to this period.

A dialogue found in the *History of Northern Zhou Dynasty* (*Zhou shi* 周書) sheds light on a different notion of the Middle Kingdom. It was a time when Yuchi Jiong 尉遲迥 (d. 580), who was a Western Wei-Northern Zhou general with prestigious family background, agreed with Yuwen Tai's 宇文泰 (534-556) opinion to attack the Shu region upon the request of Emperor Yuan 元帝 (r. 552-555) of Liang, whose younger brother, Xiao Ji 蕭紀, took over the region. In the north, Yuwen Tai was the *de facto* ruler of the Western Wei court manipulating the puppet emperor, Emperor Fei 廢帝 (r. 551-554). The following conversation took place when Yuchi Jiong discussed the attack request with court officials.

[Yuchi] Jiong said, "The relations of Shu and the Middle Kingdom has been divided for more than a hundred years. Relying on the rugged and difficult terrain, [they] did not worry about the arrival of our troops. We must firstly use select cavalry and make an incursion at a starry night. On a level road we march twice more than usual, while on the rugged road we let troops move slowly but steadily, so that [we can] come out without letting them notice and attack their heartland. The Shu people will be confused to discover the speedy arrival of the official military so certainly they cannot defend themselves after getting wind of our approach."³⁷⁷

迥曰：「蜀與中國隔絕百有餘年，恃其山川險阻，不虞我師之至。宜以精甲銳騎，星夜襲之。平路則倍道兼行，險途則緩兵漸進，出其不意，衝其腹心。蜀人既駭官軍之臨速，必望風不守矣。」

³⁷⁷ *Zhou shu* 21:350.

First, Yuchi Jiong makes a clear differentiation between the Middle Kingdom and Shu. His conception of the Middle Kingdom did not include Shu. By juxtaposing the Shu region and the Middle Kingdom, Yuchi Jiong inadvertently relegates the Middle Kingdom as a mere region. Second, Yuchi Jiong appears to wield a double standard with his version of the Middle Kingdom seemingly referring to both Northern Wei and Western Wei. Western Wei is referred to as the Middle Kingdom although Western Wei's territory did not fully include the Central Plain area of the previous Northern Wei. Third, Yuchi Jiong's conception of the Middle Kingdom is an extension on the boundaries set by Gao Lü, as Yuchi Jiong only distinguished the Shu region from the Middle Kingdom. As a result, we can clearly see that even within the Northern Dynasties, territorially, the bounds of the Middle Kingdom varied and conceptually diverges from the requirement of the Central Plain territory.

Southern Perspectives

What were southerner's perspective of the Middle Kingdom? Ever since the Five Barbarians (*wuhu*) occupied North China, many of the original northerners migrated to the south cohabiting with people native to the southern region. One example of the southerner's conception of the Middle Kingdom can be found in the Biography of Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), known for being a calligrapher during the Liu Song and Southern Qi dynasties, and also for his considerable insight in music. When he talks about "ceremonial classic music" (*yayue* 雅樂), Wang Sengqian refers to Liu Song and Northern Wei as the Middle Kingdom and the Four Barbarians (*siyi*), respectively.

[Wang] Sengqian thought deeply about “ceremonial classic music,” so during Shengming (477-479) era [of Emperor Shun of Liu Song, he] counselled [to the emperor] that even though slight modifications have been made, a lot of them have still been lost. When the Emperor wanted to send envoys [to Northern Wei] for the first time, Sengqian sent a letter to his brother’s son, [Wang] Jian, and said, “According to an old saying, ‘[When] the Middle Kingdom lost its rites, ask it to the ‘Four Barbarians.’ [When I] think of music, [this saying] also applies. Only after the defeat of Fu Jian, Eastern Jin equipped with the music [performed by] metal and stone instruments. This shows that the saying is not entirely wrong. If there remains lost music in Northern Kingdom (*beiguo*), even if one cannot simply supplement the absence of the Central Land (*zhongxia*) [with the Northern music], at least we will know the presence and absence [of such music]. The principle is the same...”³⁷⁸

僧虔留意雅樂，昇明中所奏，雖微有釐改，尚多遺失。是時上始欲通使，僧虔與兄子儉書曰：「古語云『中國失禮，問之四夷』。計樂亦如。苻堅敗後，東〔晉〕始備金石樂，故知不可全誣也。北國或有遺樂，誠未可便以補中夏之闕，且得知其存亡，亦一理也。…」

With this letter, Wang Sengqian tried to convince his nephew to ask the emperor to communicate with the Northern Wei court for the restoration of the Central Land (*zhongxia*) music. Referring to the old saying, he equates the Middle Kingdom to Liu Song and the “Four Barbarians” to Northern Wei where the Central Plain is located.³⁷⁹ He then designates Northern Wei as the “Northern Kingdom” (*beiguo*). Wang Sengqian has conflicting opinions about his neighbors to the north so therefore ends up using a double standard to label the Northern Wei. His application of the standard of the “Four Barbarians” to the Northern Wei court stems from Northern Wei having been established by the Xianbei people who were traditionally considered part of the Xiongnu. Nevertheless, Wang Sengqian most likely finds it impossible to degrade the Northern Wei outright due to the Northern Wei court occupying the Central Plain region.

³⁷⁸ Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 33:595-596.

³⁷⁹ The old saying is first seen in the “Monograph of Eastern Yi” in the *History of Later Han* (See Fan Ye 范曄 *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 85:2810. It is recorded that “it is said that when the Middle Kingdom loses its rites, seek it from the Four Barbarians.” 所謂中國失禮，求之四夷者也。

Wang Sengqian's view of the northern court is reflected during the installation of Chen Baxian 陳霸先 as Duke of Chen 陳公, who later became Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 557-559) of Chen in the Southern Liang court. At the time, Emperor Jing 敬帝 (r. 555-557) of Southern Liang bestowed the title of Duke of Chen upon Chen Baxian for his help in Emperor Jing's rise to the throne. Although the document of appointment is mostly a eulogy of Chen Baxian's achievements, it also reveals the southern court's perspective of the Middle Kingdom. In the document, Emperor Jing of Southern Liang described the situation between Northern Qi and Southern Liang. In 555, the Northern Qi court demanded the Southern Liang court to install Xiao Yuanming 蕭淵明 (also known as Marquis of Zhenyang 貞陽侯), who had been held hostage in the Eastern Wei/Northern Qi court, as the emperor of Southern Liang. Chen Baxian's friend Wang Sengbian 王僧辯 agreed with the Northern Qi court and installed Xiao Yuanming as emperor. Disagreeing with his old friend on the installment of Xiao Yuanming, Chen Baxian eventually raises an army, forces the abdication of subvert Xiao Yuanming, and successfully enthrones Emperor Jing of Liang.

“However, as Heaven did not regret the disaster [on which it has given] and the ‘barbarian’ (*yi*) villains became exuberant, Southern Land (*nanxia*) was destroyed in chaos and Western Capital (*xijing*) was overturn. [When] the group of barbarians (*hu*) went wild in the confusion of the moment and installed a collateral line to steal the emperorship, the officials succumbed and enticed the enemy so that [they] already fell into the Paulownia Palace (*tonggong*). [As they] schemed to threaten the Han chamber (Han *ge*), the fortune of the imperial family already became precarious so that the [imperial court] became useless; the Middle Kingdom became chaotic so that it was not even like hanging by a thread. The Duke became so angry [about the situation] that he threw up his sleeves brusquely to save this dynasty...”³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ Yao Silian 姚思廉, *Chen shu* 陳書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 1:15; Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Nan shi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 9:265.

既而天未悔禍，夷醜荐臻，南夏崩騰，西京蕩覆，羣胡孔熾，藉亂乘間，推納藩枝，盜假神器，冢司昏撓，旁引寇讎，既見貶於桐宮，方謀危於漢閣，皇運已殆，何殊贅旒，中國搖然，非徒如綫。公赫然投袂，匡救本朝…

In the document, Northern Qi is depicted as “barbarians,” either *yi* or *hu*, while the Xiao family is referred to as descendants of Han. Additionally, the Southern Liang court considers themselves as the Middle Kingdom as well as the Southern Land (*nanxia*).³⁸¹ It is apparent that while the Northern Dynasties legitimated themselves as the Middle Kingdom through territory, the Southern Liang court used ethnicity to legitimate themselves. By simply using the Han and barbarian dichotomy, the Southern Liang court utilized the medium of people rather than geography to overcome their geographical weakness to Northern Qi which resided in the Jiangnan area, and to legitimate themselves as the Middle Kingdom.

Mutual Degradation

While people in the Northern and Southern Dynasties considered themselves as having lived in the “Middle Kingdom,” they also used derogatory terminology to refer to one another. The rulers of the Northern Dynasties sometimes designated the southern rulers as “island barbarians” (*daoyi* 島夷). In *Wei shu*, “island barbarian” was added as a prefix to the names of emperors of Southern Dynasties. For example, Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 420-422) of Liu Song, was called “the island barbarian, Liu Yu” 島夷劉裕.³⁸² Also, Emperor Gao 高帝 (r. 479-482) of Southern Qi,

³⁸¹ Here, it is likely that they used “nan” (south) instead of “zhong” (middle or central) as they were in the south.

³⁸² *Wei shu* 2:42.

was named “the island Barbarian, Xiao Daocheng” 島夷蕭道成.³⁸³ This derogatory designation was also applied to the title of their biographies. For instance, the two biographies under the ninety-eighth fascicle of *Wei shu* were titled “the island barbarian, Xiao Daocheng” and “the island barbarian, Xiao Yan” 島夷蕭衍, respectively.³⁸⁴

In like fashion, the southern rulers designated the northern rulers as “braided barbarians” (*suolu* 索虜) or “western barbarians” (*xilu* 西虜). Specifically, the Tuoba 拓跋 people, one of the tribals group of Xianbei, were called “braided barbarians.”³⁸⁵ Likewise, other branches of Xianbei or Xiongnu were called “western barbarians.” For instance, Helian Ding 赫連定 (d. 432), the last ruler of Xia 夏 (407–431), was designated “the western barbarian, Helian Ding” 西虜赫連定.³⁸⁶ Another example is Qifo Qiangui 乞佛乾歸 (d. 412, also known as Qifu Qiangui 乞伏乾歸) who was the second ruler of Western Qin 西秦 (385–400, 409–431) among the Sixteen Kingdoms. In *Song shu*, he was called “the western barbarian, Qifo Qiangui” 西虜乞佛乾歸.³⁸⁷ Considering that Helian Ding was Xiongnu and Qifu Qiangui was Xianbei, ethnicity was used as a generalization for the derogatory designations.

During the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, each side used the term of “barbarian” based on differing concepts and perspectives. The northerners considered southerners as barbarians using territorial bounds while the southerners used ethnicity as their reason for the derogatory classification of the northerners. Conclusively, although this period

³⁸³ *Wei shu* 7:147.

³⁸⁴ *Wei shu* 98:2161.

³⁸⁵ *Song shu* 95:2321.

³⁸⁶ This can be found in the description of Helian Ding being defeated by Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei. It is recorded that “The Western Barbarian, Helian Ding was defeated by the Braided Barbarian, Tuoba Tao” 西虜赫連定為索虜拓跋燾所破，奔上邽。See *Song shu* 98:2415.

³⁸⁷ *Song shu* 98:2405.

witnessed a fragmented the Middle Kingdom, both sides proclaimed themselves as the “Middle Kingdom” through the use of differing criteria.

The “Middle Kingdom” in the Tang Dynasty

The Tang dynasty geographically expanded on the territories of both the Northern and Southern Dynasties. During the Tang dynasty, the “Middle Kingdom” was predominantly used in both *JTS* and *XTS* to designate the Tang state itself.

In 688, Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705), also known as Empress Dowager Wu, planned to demolish Raw Qiang 生羌, a group of people who had been living in the western Shu area, in order to secure a path for the eventual invasion of Tibet.³⁸⁸ At the time, Chen Zi’ang 陳子昂 (661-702), an advisor of Wu Zetian, cautioned her that the elimination of the Qiang could lead to the Shu region being occupied by the Tibetans.

“Also, one who seeks profit will receive damage. In the old days, Shu did not communicate with the Middle Kingdom. When King Hui of Qin (r. 338-311 BC) wanted to rule all-under-heaven (*tianxia*) as emperor and consolidate feudal lords, he thought he could not accomplish this (unifying *tianxia*) without assimilating the Cong and conquering the Shu. Since the situation was not ready to raise [the military], therefore, he used Zhang Yi’s (373-310 BC) plan; by adorning beautiful women and tacitly showing golden cows, and let agents fool the lord of Shu. The lord of Shu eventually coveted profit so he ordered five strong men to drill [a hole] to go through the valley and slant a ladder to Baoxie, which [finally] installed a road to Qin. From that time, rugged and blocked [status] became unlatched and mountains and valleys became unclosed. Zhang Yi, immediately afterwards, used this convenience and unleashed the military to utterly destroy Shu. The lord of Shu was executed, and the state of Cong people was destroyed. Now Shu became [part of] the Middle Prefecture, this is because they coveted profit so [they were] destroyed... Examining closely, I consider Shu as a metropolis in the

³⁸⁸ I translated *sheng* 生 as “raw” which serves as an opposite term to “cooked” (*shu* 熟). “Raw” or “cooked” was a prefix term used for “barbarians”. Here, I do not debate if the terminology was used properly. To see more detailed usage, see Magnus Fiskesjö’s “On the 'Raw' and the 'Cooked' Barbarians of Imperial China,” *Inner Asia* 1 (1999): 139-168.

southwest, where a valuable repository of the state is resided. The valuable things all-under-heaven (*tianxia*) enter and come out from this place. Moreover, it is the place where the people are rich and grains are abundant so that [once] following down the Yangtze River, it can aid the Middle Kingdom.”³⁸⁹

且夫事有求利而得害者。則蜀昔時不通中國，秦惠王欲帝天下而并諸侯，以為不兼寶，不取蜀，勢未可舉，乃用張儀計，飾美女，譎金牛，因間以啖蜀侯。蜀侯果貪其利，使五丁力士鑿通谷，棧褒斜，置道於秦。自是險阻不關，山谷不閉，張儀蹻踵乘便，縱兵大破之，蜀侯誅，寶邑滅。至今蜀為中州，是貪利而亡… 臣竊觀蜀為西南一都會，國家之寶庫，天下珍貨聚出其中。又人富粟多，順江而下，可以兼濟中國。

Similar versions of this appeal appear in both *XTS* and *ZZTJ*.³⁹⁰ In his appeal, Chen Zi'ang narrates an old success story featuring King Hui of Qin to convince Wu Zetian to leave the Qiang people as a buffer between Tibet and Tang. His first use of the “Middle Kingdom” (*zhongguo*) was to distinguish the Shu region from the Qin state of ancient times. Chen Zi'ang implies that after King Hui of Qin conquered Shu, the Shu region was finally connected to the Middle Kingdom. However, strictly speaking, since Qin was not a unified state during King Hui's reign, the areas east of Shaanxi was not a part of the Qin territory at the time. Although Chen Zi'ang differentiated Shu from the Middle Kingdom in the Warring States period (475–221 BC), he admits that the Shu region belongs to the “Middle Prefecture” (*zhongzhou*) in his time. According to his appeal, the Shu region is already part of the Middle Prefecture and can eventually serve as a repository of the state (*guojia*). He then once again confirms that the abundancy of the Shu region will be helpful for the “Middle Kingdom,” which he assigns as the whole state.

³⁸⁹ *JTS* 190b:5022.

³⁹⁰ *ZZTJ*'s version is very short compared to *JTS*'s and *XTS*'s versions (*XTS* 150:4073-4074; *ZZTJ* 204:6455-6456).

The terminology's purpose as a state identifier is more pronounced when seen in the context of attacking neighboring states. Just before Gaozu (r. 618-626) founded the dynasty, he reacquired Wuyuan 五原 county which belonged under the sovereignty of the Turks for a short while. *ZZTJ* records that the county was returned to the Middle Kingdom after Gaozu persuaded Baghatur Shad, whose father was Yami Qaghan 啟民可汗.³⁹¹ Since Wuyuan county was located in the current Inner Mongolia region, the "Middle Kingdom" was used to refer to the state that Gaozu ruled at the time.

Later, Taizong's (r. 626-649) expansionist policies in the northeastern area reveals not only how the Middle Kingdom was conceptually used during his reign, but also highlights the breadth of the Middle Kingdom during the Tang dynasty. In 645 when Taizong solidified his will to conquer the "East of the Liao River" (Liaodong 遼東), then a territory of Koguryō, one of the ancient Korean Three Kingdoms, he used the Middle Kingdom as justification for the invasion to his chancellors.

On the *dingsi* day, Emperor told the officials, "Liaodong originally belonged to the territory of the Middle Kingdom, [but] the Sui [imperial] family did not obtain it, even though they sent militaries four times. I am now conquering the east so that the Middle Kingdom can avenge the foes of [our] sons and younger brothers; Koryō can wipe out their king's and fathers' humiliation..."³⁹²

丁亥，上謂侍臣曰：「遼東本中國之地，隋氏四出師而不能得；朕今東征，欲為中國報子弟之讎，高麗雪君父之恥耳。...」

³⁹¹ Li Yuan 李淵 (soon-to-be Tang emperor, Gaozu) let Yuwen Xin 宇文歆 persuade Baghatur Shad 莫賀咄設 to return the Wuyuan region to Tang. The following is an excerpt from *ZZTJ*. "And [Yuwen Xin] stated gains and losses [to Baghatur Shad] to stop raising military. Also [Yuwen Xin] told Baghatur Shad to send Zhang Changsun 張長遜 to the [Tang] court so that the territory of Wuyuan would return to the Middle Kingdom. Baghatur Shad followed it." 且為陳利害，止其出兵，又說莫賀咄設遣張長遜入朝，以五原之地歸之中國，莫賀咄設並從之。(*ZZTJ* 185:5787).

³⁹² *ZZTJ* 197:6217-6218.

Taizong's use of the Middle Kingdom refers to the Tang state and the states of his designated predecessors including dynasties such as Han and Cao Wei. From Taizong's perspective, Liaodong, previously a territory of the Middle Kingdom, suffered from the misfortune of not being reconquered despite a series of efforts under the Sui court. He justifies that an invasion of the Liaodong region is not only for the people of the Middle Kingdom, but also for the people of Koguryŏ. According to Hu Sanxing, the commentator of *ZZTJ*, since Koguryŏ's chancellor, Yŏn Kaesomun 淵蓋蘇文 (603-666), killed the previous king of Koguryŏ, Taizong intended to use this betrayal as an opportunity to take revenge for the Koguryŏ people.

A diplomatic visit in 644, prior to this statement by Taizong, helps bolster our understanding of Taizong's perspective on the extensive boundaries of the Middle Kingdom. Xiangli Xuanjiang 相里玄獎, Minister of Imperial Granaries 司農丞, was sent as an envoy to the capital of Koguryŏ, P'yŏngyang 平壤, where, upon his arrival, he scolded Yŏn Kaesomun for invading Shilla. Yŏn Kaesomun argued that the two cities he invaded originally belonged to Koguryŏ. Xiangli Xuanjiang responded by saying that the several cities of Liaodong were "all originally counties of the Middle Kingdom" 本皆中國郡縣.³⁹³ Although Taizong did mention that Liaodong belonged to the Middle Kingdom in the prior reference, it is questionable if Liaodong should be considered as "originally" a part of the Middle Kingdom, or therefore the Tang dynasty. Taizong's "original" Middle Kingdom seems to include the Liaodong region where the Xianbei people resided and Koguryŏ ruled for centuries. Taizong's justification of Yŏn Kaesomun's coup to invade Liaodong uses similar rhetoric to Yŏn Kaesomun's

³⁹³ *ZZTJ* 197:6206; *JTS* 199a:5322; *XTS* 220:6188. According to both *ZZTJ* and *XTS*, Xiangli Xuanjiang mentioned that the cities of Liaodong belonged to the "Middle Kingdom." *JTS* had no such reference. In *JTS*, Xiangli Xuanjiang only adds that Shilla's occupation of the cities is bygone. Xuanjiang said, "the incident already happened in the past, why do you mention it? 玄獎曰：「既往之事，焉可追論？」"

justifications for his own invasion in 645. Just like Yŏn Kaesomun claimed that the cities belonged to Koguryŏ, Taizong asserted that the two Shilla cities had been a part of the Middle Kingdom.

The use of the Middle Kingdom to refer to the Tang state becomes the standard as can be seen by this next case. In 823, Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (r. 820-824) of Tang issued an edict to prohibit the enslavement of people from Shilla, one of the Korean Three Kingdoms. He ordered that the Shilla people who were already in the “Middle Kingdom” be sent back to their state.³⁹⁴ Prior to this incident, in the third month of 821, Muzong was already receiving reports regarding the enslavement of Shilla people in the coastal area.³⁹⁵ Muzong’s use of the “Middle Kingdom” alongside “their state” implies that he conceptualizes the Middle Kingdom as his or our “state.” Even after two centuries of Tang rule, the Middle Kingdom was used to refer to the Tang state and the territory in which it claimed sovereignty. Notably, the Tang dynasty claimed sovereignty over a territory that was similar to, yet larger than the Middle Kingdom of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period.

Becoming Independent: Who Was King or King of State?³⁹⁶

The changing concept of the Middle Kingdom in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and Tang periods lays the foundation for the study of the Middle Kingdom in the tenth century. Central to this study is examining how rulers of states across the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms

³⁹⁴ In this edict, Muzong said, “those whom are already in the Middle Kingdom should be immediately released and returned to their state” 已在中國者即放歸其國. See *JTS* 16:502.

³⁹⁵ *JTS* 16:486.

³⁹⁶ For this section, please see Appendix 4.

claimed sovereignty over their states. Diplomatic relations once again become crucial when analyzing each ruler's claim to his throne.

The hierarchal relations of the states were usually defined through a tributary system or the installation of a ruler. The relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms were no exception. Sometimes, the Ten Kingdoms provided tribute to the Five Dynasties voluntarily or were forced into hierarchal relations by the Five Dynasties. The Five Dynasties rulers should have control over the southern regions according to Tang precedent, as they fancied themselves as the successors of Tang. However, there was an enormous gap between theory and reality. Not every kingdom provided tribute to the Five Dynasties. For example, after Later Liang succeeded Later Tang, Zhu Wen initiated brotherly relations with Former Shu 前蜀 (907–925). Also, Northern Han 北漢 (951-979) gave tribute to the Liao court while maintaining hostile relations against the Northern Zhou and Song courts before being defeated by the Song.

On the surface, the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period and the Five Barbarians and Sixteen Kingdoms period seem characteristically similar with both featuring hectic power games among many short-lived states. However, there are crucial differences between these two periods. The main difference is that most of the rulers of the sixteen kingdoms had foreign ethnic backgrounds. As the period name implies, the rulers of thirteen out of the sixteen kingdoms came from so-called the “Five Barbarians” (*wuhu*). Another significant difference is that most of the sixteen kingdoms became independent on their own. Most of the rulers of the sixteen kingdoms did not ask for blessings from the rulers in the Central Plain like the “Five Dynasties” to become rulers of their own states, because there was no such state which could give them full legitimation.

Specifically, the Ten Kingdoms can be classified into three categories based on their respective relationships with the Five Dynasties and Liao: (1) regimes which confirmed their independence through investiture permission, but did not receive state status; (2) regimes which confirmed their independence through installation permission and received state (*guo* 國) status; and (3) regimes which spontaneously became independent with rulers declaring themselves as emperors or kings of states. However, states' categorizations were not static as they could change due to changes relations.

Both rulers in the first and second categories received nominal positions, offices, and titles from the Five Dynasties. However, the key difference between the first and second categories was whether a state received state status or not, or in other words, if they were given conceptual independence. I argue that installing someone as “king of state” (*guowang* 國王) instead of “king” (*wang* 王) is a process of separating the regime from the Five Dynasties. Once a certain regime was declared as a state (*guo* 國), conceptually, it was not a monarchical feudatory but rather a sovereign state. Through this process of receiving state status, these states received confirmation of their independence. The regimes in the third category were strong enough to stand alone without blessings or confirmations from other states. Then what was the standard to decide whether a ruler would be installed as “king” or “king of state”?³⁹⁷ How were they different?

³⁹⁷ Kim Chong-söp and Hugh Clark also dealt with the difference between “king of state” and “king.” Kim Chongsöp classified the Ten Kingdoms into two groups: (1) the states who became vassals of the Five Dynasties and (2) the states who did not become vassals of the Five Dynasties. See Kim Chong-söp 김중섭, “Odae wangjo ūi taeoe kwan'gye,” 五代王朝의 對外關係, *Chungguk kojungsesa yŏn'gu* 中國古中世史研究 31 (2014): 405-445. Hugh Clark also wrote the significance of conferring the “king of state” title. He said, “The significance of this is that by naming the southern lords *guowang*, the court defined them as autonomous rulers bound to the central court only by the rituals that bound *wang* to *di*.” See Clark, *China during the Tang-Song Interregnum*, 878–978, 32.

The rulers of the Five Dynasties recognized what it meant to offer the other regimes “state” status. Take for example the case of king of Wuyue during the reign of Zhuangzong of Later Tang.

King of Wuyue, [Qian] Liu resumed paying tribute to our government. On the *renwu* day, on the basis of Later Liang’s [offering] office and peerage, the emperor ordered [installing] him. [Qian] Liu [not only] provided tribute generously, but also bribed powerful and important people, and asked for golden seal, jade fascicle, not mentioning [his] name when bestowing edicts, [and] his designation as “king of state” (*guowang*). An official said, “[according to] precedents, only Son of Heaven uses jade fascicle, but kings and dukes, they all use bamboo fascicle. Unless they are the “Four Barbarians” (*siyi* 四夷), there was no one who was installed as king of state.” The emperor dampened down the [advice of] officials but followed Qian Liu’s request.³⁹⁸

吳越王鏐復脩本朝職貢。壬午，帝因梁官爵而命之。鏐厚貢獻，并賂權要，求金印、玉冊、賜詔不名、稱國王。有司言：「故事惟天子用玉冊，王公皆用竹冊。又非四夷，無封國王者。」帝皆曲從鏐意。

After the establishment of Later Tang, this was the first time the king of Wuyue, Qian Liu 錢鏐 (r. 907-932), was installed by Zhuangzong. As an official advised, Zhuangzong must have known that installing Qian Liu as “king of state” was different from precedent. Presumably, installing him as king of Wuyue State meant Later Tang considered Wuyue not as a principality, but rather as a state comparable to the “Four Barbarians” states. This was not the first time Qian Liu was installed as “king of state.” Under the Later Liang court, Qian Liu was installed as “king of Wuyue” by Zhu Wen and then later as “king of Wuyue state” by Modi 末帝 (r. 913-923) of Liang.³⁹⁹ After Later Tang replaced Later Liang, Qian Liu must have wanted to ensure his status as “king of state,” the status he had received from Modi of Later Liang. It is understandable that Qian Liu bribed important people in the Later Tang court and paid tremendous amounts of

³⁹⁸ ZZTJ 273:8926.

³⁹⁹ WDHY 11:12-1; ZZTJ 272:8880.

tribute for this status. He not only asked for the king of state status, but also sought to perform rituals historically reserved for the Son of Heaven. During this time, the Later Tang court had suffered not only from frequent warfare with the Khitans, but also had hostile relations with the Former Shu court. The Later Tang court probably wanted to avoid unnecessarily aggravating Wuyue. Eventually, Zhuangzong decided to maintain Qian Liu's status as king of state which Later Liang had previously acknowledged. What about other states? Which rulers became kings of states?

In this section, I analyze each relationship between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms through the context of installations. And, for comparison's sake, I include an example from the "Four Barbarians" states: Koryō (Ch. Gaoli) and Shilla (Ch. Xinluo 新羅). As for the translation of *wang*, I translate *wang* as "king" rather than "prince" for rulers who were listed in *XWDS* as hereditary houses of the Ten Kingdoms.⁴⁰⁰ However, I translate *wang* as "prince" if the ruler did not receive the title hereditarily and the title was bestowed before the person had corresponding regional power. For instance, Gao Jixing 高季興 (r. 924-929), the ruler of Jingnan 荆南, did not have a hereditary house when he was installed as *wang* in the Later Liang court. In this case, I translate Gao Jixing's designation as "prince of Bohai" 渤海王 not "king of Bohai." However, when Ma Xifan 馬希範 was installed as *wang* by Mindi 閔帝 (r. 933-934) of Later Tang, I translated *wang* as "king" because the Ma family already had an autonomous hereditary regime for generations.

Former Shu and Later Shu

⁴⁰⁰ *XWDS* 61:747.

When looking at the relationship between Later Liang and Former Shu 前蜀, the letter Zhu Wen sent to Wang Jian 王建 (r. 907-918) in 912 is quite striking with regards to the language Zhu Wen used. After Zhu Wen established Later Liang, he sent an envoy to the Shu court with a state letter to make an alliance with Wang Jian against Qi 岐, where a warlord Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (856-924) was stationed. At the time, Later Liang was threatened by not only Li Maozhen's Qi but also Li Keyong's Jin and Liu Shouguang's 劉守光 (d. 914) Yan 燕, with Later Shu also having hostile relations against Qi. In the letter, Zhu Wen addressed Wang Jian as “emperor, the eighth brother” (*huangdi ba xiong* 皇帝八兄). The “brother” was used to represent their former relationship when they were Military Governors under the Tang court. In this letter, Zhu Wen not only recognizes Wang Jian as brother, but also the “emperor” of Shu.⁴⁰¹

As a result, Wang Jian accepted Zhu Wen's cordial request for equal relations by sending a reply to the Later Liang court. In this letter he called Zhu Wen and himself emperors of each respective regime, emphasizing that Liang and Shu should have eternal brotherly relations.⁴⁰² Wang Jian's establishment of brotherly relations created a precedent in which future rulers of Former Shu and of the following Later Shu continuously pursued the designation of “emperor” in all relations with the Five Dynasties. When Wang Yan 王衍 (r. 918-925), Wang Jian's successor, sent envoys to the Later Tang court, he sent a letter (*shu*) to Zhuangzong. He indicated that he was of equal status with the Tang emperor by starting his letter with “Emperor of Great Shu sends a letter to Emperor of Great Tang” (*da Shu huangdi shang shu da Tang huangdi* 大蜀

⁴⁰¹ *SGQC* 36:9-2. Also, for the details about the relations between Later Liang and Former Shu, see Wang Hongjie, *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China: The Former Shu Regime* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011), 99-146.

⁴⁰² *SGQC* 36:12.

皇帝上書大唐皇帝).⁴⁰³ Although *JWDS* records show envoys coming to the court to provide tribute, Wang Yan was evidently following precedent.⁴⁰⁴

Later Shu rulers continued this standard. In 933, Mingzong of Later Tang installed Meng Zhixiang as king of Shu. However, the following year, Meng Zhixiang called himself emperor of Great Shu. His successor, Meng Chang 孟昶 (r. 934-965), also maintained the status of emperor in his relations with Later Jin.⁴⁰⁵ In the first month of 937, a few months after Shi Jingtang became the emperor of Jin, the Later Jin envoys conveyed a diplomatic letter to the Shu court, in which Shi Jingtang called Meng Chang “Emperor of Great Shu.”⁴⁰⁶ Meng Chang’s efforts to retain equal footing with the Five Dynasties even continued to the reign of Shizong 世宗 (r. 954-959) of Later Zhou. However, his intent to maintain equal relations was not reciprocated. In 955, Meng Chang asked the Zhou court for friendly relations, but was rejected due to Meng Chang’s self-designation as “Emperor of Great Shu.”⁴⁰⁷ Again in 957, Meng Chang sent a letter to Shizong asking for friendly relations, but Shizong refused it again for the same reason.⁴⁰⁸ Both Former and Later Shu fit perfectly into the third category.

Chu

Chu can be identified as belonging to either the first or second categories depending on the point in time. The lord-vassal relationship with the Five Dynasties started when Zhu Wen installed Ma

⁴⁰³ *JWDS* 32:438.

⁴⁰⁴ In *CFYG*, it is recorded that Wang Yan called himself “King of Great Shu State” 大蜀國王 (*CFYG* 232:2764-1).

⁴⁰⁵ *JWDS* 44:602; *ZZTJ* 278:9082.

⁴⁰⁶ *SGCQ* 49:4.

⁴⁰⁷ Shizong considered it as equal footing. See *ZZTJ* 292:9531.

⁴⁰⁸ *JWDS* 117:1562; *ZZTJ* 293:9571.

Yin 馬殷 (r. 907-930), as “king of Chu” 楚王 in 907.⁴⁰⁹ Although Chu’s amicable relationship with the Five Dynasties had moments of turmoil,⁴¹⁰ the Chu rulers generally pursued “king” or “king of state” status. With regards to Chu’s relations with Later Tang, Ma Yin was especially tactical. Even though he was a vassal of the Later Liang court, in order to initiate friendly relations, Ma Yin sent envoys to Li Keyong after Later Jin’s conquest of the Hedong region.⁴¹¹ When Later Tang conquered Former Shu, Ma Yin immediately sent a “tributary memorial” (*biao*) to Zhuangzong asking to preserve his position as vassal.⁴¹² Ma Yin’s opportunistic loyalty eventually bore fruit when Mingzong installed Ma Yin as “king of Chu state” in 927. However, this status was short-lived since after Ma Yin’s death, his successor, Ma Xisheng 馬希聲 (r. 930-932) only managed to keep his titles of Military Governor of Wu’an Circuit 武安軍節度使 and Military Governor of Jingjiang Circuit 靜江軍節度使 without being invested as either “king” or “king of state.” According to the *Spring and Autumn Annals of the Ten Kingdoms* 十國春秋 (*SGCQ*), this was probably a result of his father’s will, to serve the Tang court as a mere vassal.⁴¹³ It took some time for the Chu rulers to receive the “king” status from the Later Tang court. In 934, Ma Xifan 馬希範 (r. 932-947), a brother of Ma Xisheng, recovered the status of “king of Chu” from Mindi of Later Tang.⁴¹⁴ During Later Jin and Han, the Chu rulers maintained their status as king.⁴¹⁵ However, Ma Xi’e’s 馬希萼 (r. 951) case slightly differed as he declared

⁴⁰⁹ *WDHY* 11:12-1; *JWDS* 3:49.

⁴¹⁰ In the fifth and sixth months of 907, Later Liang invaded Chu. (*ZZTJ* 266:8681-8182.)

⁴¹¹ *ZZTJ* 269:8808.

⁴¹² *ZZTJ* 274:8946.

⁴¹³ *SGCQ* 68:1.

⁴¹⁴ *ZZTJ* 278:9100.

⁴¹⁵ Although there was no particular installment by the Jin emperors, Ma Xifan is recorded as “king of Chu” during the reigns of Shi Jingtang and Shi Chonggui in *ZZTJ* (*ZZTJ* 280:9146; 281:9193; 282:9202, 9208-9210, and 9230; 283:9241, 9258; 284:9294; 285:9301 and 9310) and *JWDS* (*JWDS* 76:996;

himself as king of Chu in 950 and was later invested by the Southern Tang court the following year.⁴¹⁶

Jingnan

Jingnan 荆南, the smallest kingdom of the Ten Kingdoms, belongs to the first category when considering its relations with the two courts, Later Tang and Wu. Gao Jixing 高季興 was first installed as prince of Bohai during the reign of Modi (r. 913-923) of Later Liang. After establishing the regime, as the first ruler of Jingnan, Gao Jixing was invested as prince of Nanping 南平王 by the Later Tang court in 924.⁴¹⁷ However after the Later Tang court refused to give patrimonial control over Kuizhou 夔州, Zhongzhou 忠州, and Wanzhou 萬州 to Gao Jixing, he betrayed the Later Tang court. After his rejection by Mingzong, Gao Jixing converted his loyalty over to the Wu court, which invested him as king of Qin 秦王 in 928.⁴¹⁸ Later, Gao Chonghui 高從誨 (r. 929-948), Gao Jixing's first son and successor, was invested as Military Governor of Jingnan by the Wu 吳 ruler.⁴¹⁹ Accordingly, Gao Chonghui decided to resubmit to the Tang court and eventually recovered the king status.⁴²⁰ During the Later Jin dynasty, Gao Conghui was invested as king of Jingnan by Shi Jingtang. His successor, Gao Baorong 高保融

81:1070 and 1076; 84:1118). During the Later Han dynasty, Gaozu invested Ma Xiguang 馬希廣 as king of Chu in 947 (ZZTJ 287:9368).

⁴¹⁶ ZZTJ 290:9458.

⁴¹⁷ CFYG 129:1556; JWDS 31:431; WDHY 11:13-1; SGCQ 100:6-2; ZZTJ 273:8917.

⁴¹⁸ XWDS 69:857; ZZTJ 275:9002; 276:9020.

⁴¹⁹ ZZTJ 276:9026.

⁴²⁰ JWDS 45:616; SGCQ 101:2-1; ZZTJ 278:9100.

(r. 948-960), was installed as king of Jingnan under the Later Zhou court.⁴²¹ The politics practiced by Jingnan rulers and their swaying loyalty to the plural courts was criticized by Ouyang Xiu in *XWDS*. He explains that due to the geography of Jingnan and its limited territory, Jingnan's overall strategy was to leech off of stronger states.⁴²² Jingnan's practical strategy was however helpful in extending the lifetime of the state. Ever since Gao Jixing was installed as king of Nanping, Jingnan lasted for over 50 years before it finally submitted to Song.

Wu and Southern Tang

Wu 吳 transitioned from the second category to the third. Wu started with Yang Xingmi 楊行密 (852-905) who was invested as prince of Wu by Zhaozong of Tang. The rulers of Wu remained faithful to the Tang dynasty for generations. Later, Yang Xingmi's son, Yang Longyan 楊隆演 (r. 908-920) was installed as King of Hongnong by Li Yan 李儼, a Tang emissary also formerly sent to Yang Xingmi.⁴²³ In 919, Yang Longyan declared himself as king of Wu state.⁴²⁴ And, his successor, Yang Pu 楊溥 (r. 920-937), installed himself as emperor (*huangdi*).⁴²⁵ Ever since Yang Xingmi was invested as prince of Wu, the Wu rulers refused to become a vassal state to any of the Five Dynasties. Instead, they remained faithful to the Tang court until the last ruler of Wu, Yang Pu, claimed himself to be emperor.

⁴²¹ After Gao Conghui died, even though Gao Baorong succeeded him, Yindi of Han did not install him as king of Jingnan, but rather as Military Governor of Jingnan. After Zhou was established, he was initially installed as king of Bohai prefecture before finally becoming king of Jingnan.

⁴²² *XWDS* 69:859; *SGCQ* 11:5-6.

⁴²³ *ZZTJ* 266:8702.

⁴²⁴ *ZZTJ* 270:8843; *XWDS* 61:756.

⁴²⁵ *XWDS* 61:758.

The Wu kingdom changed hands over to the Xu family after Yang Pu abdicated the throne to the powerful chancellor, Xu Zhigao 徐知誥, in 937. Xu Zhigao changed his name to Li Bian 李昇 (r. 937-943) as well as the dynastic name to “Tang” in order to legitimate his enthronement.⁴²⁶ Since Yang Pu of Wu had already declared himself as emperor, the rulers of Southern Tang did not have difficulty staying independent from the Five Dynasties. After Li Bian became the ruler of Southern Tang, his successor attempted to maintain his status as emperor for a while. After Li Bian died, his first son, Li Jing 李景 (r. 943-961) was installed as emperor in 943. When Later Zhou attacked Southern Tang in 956, Li Jing sent a letter (*shu*) to Shizong of Later Zhou. In this letter, although the Southern Tang court was on the defensive, in the hope of Later Zhou’s humane retreat, Li Jing impertinently wrote “Tang Emperor sends a letter to the Emperor of Great Zhou” (*Tang huangdi feng shu yu da Zhou huangdi* 唐皇帝奉書於大周皇帝) and asked if he could serve Shizong as an elder brother in order to suspend the battle.⁴²⁷ After Shizong ignored the offer and kept attacking, Li Jing changed tracks entirely. In contrast to his impudent attitude from before, he asked Shizong to withdraw in return for relinquishing his designation as emperor as well as ceding six prefectures.⁴²⁸ After two years of wearisome conflicts, Li Jing accepted the status of vassal of the Later Zhou court. Shizong concluded their relationship as one of emperor to “Lord of the State” (*guozhu* 國主).⁴²⁹ From this moment onwards, the Southern Tang rulers were called “Lord of Jiangnan State” (*Jiangnan guozhu* 江南國主).

⁴²⁶ At the time of enthronement, Xu Zhigao already changed his name to Xu Gao. He excluded his middle letter, “zhi” 知, to distinguish himself from his brothers. In 939, Xu Gao changed his name to Li Bian. (*SGCQ* 101:3-1)

⁴²⁷ *JWDS* 116:1542; *XWDS* 62:773; *ZZTJ* 292:9539; *CFYG* 118:1415; *SGCQ* 16:17.

⁴²⁸ *ZZTJ* 293:9548.

⁴²⁹ *ZZTJ* 294:9580-9581.

Shizong refrained from degrading Li Jing to the mere status of “king of state” (*guowang*), but instead addressed him as “Lord of the State” (*guozhu*). This was not the first time the designation “Lord of the State” was used in history. When Zhuangzong of Later Tang sent envoys to Wu to announce his victory over the Later Liang court in 923, he sent an edict to the Wu court. However, the king of the Wu state, Yang Pu, refused to accept this message as an edict.⁴³⁰ In the end, Zhuangzong changed the greeting and wrote, “Emperor of Great Tang sending a letter to the Lord of the Wu State” (*da Tang huangdi zhi shu yu Wu guozhu* 大唐皇帝致書于吳國主) based on the “manner of states of equal status” (*diguoli* 敵國禮). In return for Zhuangzong’s concession, Yang Pu replied, “Lord of Great Wu State offers up to the Emperor of Great Tang” (*da Wu guozhu shang da Tang huangdi*) 大吳國主上大唐皇帝. Here, Yang Pu’s designation as “Lord of the State” was used to establish relatively equal relations. Likewise, although Li Jing had to give up his designation as emperor, the alternative term “Lord of the State” was a mindful consideration to save the Southern Tang ruler face from being degraded to the position of “king of state”.

Min

Min 閩 was located in modern day Fujian Province. Min’s case was complicated as it belongs to all three categories, dependent on the point in time. The first ruler, Wang Shen zhi 王審知 was installed as “king of Min” by Zhu Wen in 909.⁴³¹ However, his son, Wang Yanhan 王延翰 (r. 926-927), declared himself as “king of Min state” in 926, proclaiming Min as an independent

⁴³⁰ ZZTJ 272:8903.

⁴³¹ SGCQ 94:9-2; SGCQ 95:6-1; CFYG 196:2360; WDHY 11:12-1; XWDS 68:846.

state.⁴³² His proof of Min's independence stemmed from Sima Qian's record of Min state.⁴³³ The Later Tang court tried to restore the lord-vassal relationship with Mingzong investing Wang Yanjun 王延鈞 (r. 927-935), who killed his brother Wang Yanhan to become the ruler of Min, as king of Min in 928.⁴³⁴ However, Wang Yanjun later independently installed himself as emperor of Min in 932.⁴³⁵ Shi Jingtang of Later Jin also tried to prevent Min rulers from calling themselves emperor. In 938, Shi Jingtang installed Wang Chang 王昶 (r. 935-938) as king of Min state. This time, unlike Mingzong's investiture of Wang Yanjun as king of Min, Shi Jingtang recognized Wang Chang only as the king of state, but consoled him by bestowing upon him "a red robe" 赭袍. According to Hu Sanxing, the commentator of *ZZTJ*, bestowing a red robe is analogous to giving the blessing to "steal designation" (*qiehao* 竊號). Considering red robes are what Tang emperors wore for generations,⁴³⁶ the Later Jin court implicitly acknowledged the Min ruler's status as coterminous with the Jin emperor. Wang Chang's successor, Wang Yanxi 王延曦 (d. 944), installed himself as king of Min state in 939 and was later invested as king of Min state by Shi Jingtang the following year.⁴³⁷ Finally, Wang Yanxi declared himself as emperor in 941.⁴³⁸ However, relations with the Five Dynasties changed after general Zhu Wenjin 朱文進 started to rule the Min court. He seized power after assassinating

⁴³² *SGCQ* 91:1; *ZZTJ* 275:8993.

⁴³³ *SGCQ* 91:1; *XWDS* 68:847.

⁴³⁴ *JWDS* 39:540; *CFYG* 129:1556; *WDHY* 11:13-1.

⁴³⁵ *CFYG* 219:2629; *CFYG* 223:2672; *XWDS* 68:848; *ZZTJ* 277:9073.

⁴³⁶ *ZZTJ* 281:9193; *ZZTJ* 268:8742.

⁴³⁷ *SGCQ* 92:1; *ZZTJ* 282:9206.

⁴³⁸ Initially, Wang Yanxi designated himself as Great August of Min 大閩皇 in the seventh month of 941 (*ZZTJ* 282:9226). In the tenth month of same year, he finally installed himself as emperor (*ZZTJ* 282:9229). According to *JWDS*, Shi Jingtang sent envoys to install Wang Yanxi as king of Min state. However, it is not clear whether Wang Yanxi accepted the investiture (*JWDS* 80:1054).

Wang Yanxi and was invested as king of Min state by the Later Jin court in 944.⁴³⁹ He confirmed the hierarchal relationship by designating Min as *fan* or vassal to the Later Jin court.

Southern Han

Southern Han 南漢, located in modern Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, belonged to the third category. Relations between the Southern Han dynasty and the Five Dynasties started after Liu Yin 劉隱 (874-911) received a fiefdom from Zhu Wen in 907.⁴⁴⁰ However, his brother and successor, Liu Yan 劉龔, sought independence from neighboring states. In 915, after hearing that Modi of Later Liang installed Qian Liu as “king of state,” Liu Yan requested Modi to install him as King of Nanyue 南越王. Modi rejected this request which resulted in Liu Yan turning his back to the Liang court. At the time, Liu Yan said, “Currently, the Middle Kingdom is in chaos. So who can become Son of Heaven? How can I go over mountains and seas and ten thousand *li* farther to serve this false court?” 今中國紛紛，孰為天子！安能梯航萬里，遠事偽庭乎. Then he stopped sending envoys and tribute to the Liang court.⁴⁴¹ Although eight years had passed since the start of the relations, the Liang court could not exert its influence this deep in the south. Also, this shows how simple it was to abandon the lord-vassal relationship during this chaotic period. In 917, Liu Yan finally installed himself as emperor of Great Yue. In addition, he sent envoys to the Wu court to encourage Yang Longyan to install himself as emperor.⁴⁴² The Liang

⁴³⁹ *JWDS* 83:1097; *SGCQ* 92:9-2; *SGCQ* 98:8-2; *ZZTJ* 284:9277.

⁴⁴⁰ *ZZTJ* 266:8680. In 909, Zhu Wen invested Liu Yin as prince of Nanping (*ZZTJ* 267:8708). The following year, Zhu Wen invested Liu Yin as prince of Nanhai (*SGQC* 58:3).

⁴⁴¹ *ZZTJ* 269:8799. A similar record is seen in *JWDS*. See *JWDS* 135:1808.

⁴⁴² *ZZTJ* 270:8817; *XWDS* 65:811. Later in 918, Liu Yan changed the dynastic name to Han. He also established shrines for three generations—for his grandfather, father, and brother.

court's reaction was slow. Only in 919 did the Liang court remove the offices which were previously bestowed upon Liu Yan.⁴⁴³

Unlike the hardline policy he practiced against the Later Liang court, Liu Yan chose to conduct a policy of appeasement with the new Tang court. In 923, Liu Yan sent envoys seeking friendly relations with the Tang court. Instead of calling himself emperor in the diplomatic letter, he lowered himself to King of Great Han State 大漢國王,⁴⁴⁴ which shows that designations were quite malleable and fluctuated depending on the political reality of the time. Thanks to its geographical distance from North China, the Southern Han rulers enjoyed their independence and retained their designation as emperors for generations.

Wuyue

Wuyue 吳越, a state neighboring Min and Wu/Southern Tang, belonged to both the first and second categories depending on the point in time. The name of the kingdom is directly related to the founding ruler's fiefdom during the Tang dynasty. The first ruler of Wuyue, Qian Liu 錢鏐, was installed as prince of Wu 吳王 and prince of Yue 越王 during the reign of Zhaozong of Tang.⁴⁴⁵ It was under Zhu Wen of Liang that Qian Liu was installed as king of Wuyue.⁴⁴⁶ Although Qian Liu did not declare himself as king of state, he used the independent era name, "Heavenly Treasure" (*tianbao* 天寶). According to *SGCQ*, Modi of Liang later installed Qian

⁴⁴³ *JWDS* 9:139; *ZZTJ* 270:8849.

⁴⁴⁴ *CFYG* 232:2764; *JWDS* 32:446; *SGCQ* 58:8; *XWDS* 65:812.

⁴⁴⁵ *ZZTJ* 263:8575; *ZZTJ* 264:8632. In 904, Qian Liu requested Zhaozong to be installed as prince of Wuyue. Zhaozong refused and instead installed him as prince of Wu.

⁴⁴⁶ *ZZTJ* 256:8680.

Liu as king of Wuyue State, leading Qian Liu to establish a state.⁴⁴⁷ There was a time when Mingzong of Tang demoted Qian Liu to Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師) because of his excessive exercise of authority. It took almost two years for Qian Liu to be reinstalled as king of Wuyue state, a year before he died. However, his successor, Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘 (r. 932-937), was only invested as king rather than king of state.⁴⁴⁸ It seems that Qian Yuanguan faithfully followed Qian Liu's will to serve the Later Tang court as a vassal.⁴⁴⁹ Shi Jingtang invested him as king of Wuyue state in 937.⁴⁵⁰ Ensuing emperors in Jin, Han, and Zhou followed the precedent so that every successor of Qian Liu was installed as kings of Wuyue state.⁴⁵¹

Northern Han

Northern Han 北漢, located between Five Dynasties and the Khitans, belonged to the third category. After the Later Han dynasty was defeated by Guo Wei of Later Zhou, Liu Chong 劉崇 (r. 951-954) succeeded his nephew and reestablished the Han dynasty. Following precedent, he called himself emperor.⁴⁵² Instead of forging friendly relations with the Later Zhou court, Liu Chong initiated a lord-vassal relationship with Liao. In 951, Liu Chong promised Shizong of

⁴⁴⁷ *SGQC* 78:14.

⁴⁴⁸ *WDHY* 11:13-2; *SGQC* 79:5-1. After Zhuangzong died, Qian Yuanguan was installed as King of Wu 吳王.

⁴⁴⁹ *SGQC* 79:4-2; *ZZTJ* 277:9066. Qian Liu left his will that the Wu court should follow the “practice of a vassal” (*fanzhen fa* 藩鎮法)”

⁴⁵⁰ *JWDS* 76:1009; *ZZTJ* 281:9184.

⁴⁵¹ In 941, after Qian Yuanguan died, Shi Jingtang invested Qian Hongzuo 錢弘佐 as King of Wuyue State. (*ZZTJ* 282:9232). In 947, Liu Zhiyuan invested Qian Hongzong 錢弘侬 as King of Wuyue (*ZZTJ* 287:9375). Yindi of Later Han invested Qian Hongchu 錢弘俶 as King of Wu state (*ZZTJ* 288:9396). It seems that Taizu and Gongdi of Later Zhou also recognized him as a king of state. According to *JWDS*, both Taizu and Gongdi added offices to “king of Wuyue State” (*JWDS* 114:1518; *JWDS* 120:1593).

⁴⁵² *CFYG* 66:741; *CFYG* 209:2635; *JWDS* 135:1811; *ZZTJ* 290:9453.

Liao that he will follow the precedent set by the Later Jin court in return for military aid against the Later Zhou court.⁴⁵³ In the fourth month of the same year, after Shizong sent envoys to the Northern Han court, Liu Chong sent him a letter (*shu*) as “nephew emperor” (*zhi huangdi* 姪皇帝) and asked to be installed as emperor.⁴⁵⁴ Two months later, Shizong officially installed Liu Chong as emperor and his wife as empress.⁴⁵⁵ The lord-vassal relationship between Liao and Northern Han continued even after Liu Chong died. In the eleven month of 954, the Liao court sent an envoy to install Liu Chengjun 劉承鈞 (r. 954-968) as emperor of Northern Han. At the time, Liu Chengjun called himself “son” (*nan* 男) while Muzong of Liao called him “son emperor” (*er huangdi* 兒皇帝).⁴⁵⁶ After Liu Chengjun died in 968, his successor, Liu Ji’en 劉繼恩 (d. 968) did not seem to have been officially installed as emperor by the Liao emperor, as he was murdered in the same year.⁴⁵⁷ The last emperor of Northern Han, Liu Jiyuan 劉繼元 was installed by Muzong of Liao in 969. For twenty-eight years, the emperors of Northern Han maintained a lord-vassal relationship with Liao.

“Eastern Barbarians” (*dongyi*) as One Example of the “Four Barbarians” (*siyi*)

(1) *Koryō*

⁴⁵³ ZZTJ 290:9455; QDGZ 4:47.

⁴⁵⁴ SGCQ 104:3-2; ZZTJ 290:9460.

⁴⁵⁵ LS 5:66; XWDS 70:863; ZZTJ 290:9462; According to LS, Liu Chong begged (*qi*) Shizong to install him as emperor so Shizong sent envoys to install him. As he was newly installed as emperor by the Liao court, Liu Chong changed his name to Liu Min 劉旻.

⁴⁵⁶ SGCQ 105:1; ZZTJ 292:9520.

⁴⁵⁷ XWDS 70:869. As a legitimate successor, Liu Ji’en sent envoys to the Liao court to report about a situation of mourning (*gao'ai*).

Similar to how Tang designated surrounding foreign regimes as states (*guo*), the Five Dynasties also installed the rulers of the so-called “Four Barbarians” as kings of states (*guowang*). An example of one of these Four Barbarian states is Koryŏ state. When Koryŏ was established in 918, the ruler declared himself king of Koryŏ without any official installation by the Liang emperor, Zhu Wen.⁴⁵⁸ Relations with the Middle Kingdom started in earnest during the reign of Mingzong of Later Tang.⁴⁵⁹ The first record of sending envoys from Wang Kŏn 王建, known as Taejo 太祖 (r. 918-943) of Koryŏ, to Mingzong appears in 926 in *History of Koryŏ* (*Koryŏsa* 高麗史).⁴⁶⁰ In 928 and 929, Wang Kŏn sent envoys to the Later Tang court again.⁴⁶¹ Only starting from the summer of 932 did the two states officially start a lord-vassal relationship with Mingzong installing Wang Kŏn as King of Koryŏ State.⁴⁶² Both in *Koryŏsa* and *QTW*, the edict which Mingzong sent to the Koryŏ court was recorded as follows:

“... Oh! You, [Wang] Kŏn, who is the deputy king of Koryŏ state! Your talent is magnificent and dauntless and [your] wisdom is full of tact. You were born as the best in the frontier city and revealed your magnificence while carrying aspirations. As mountains and rivers were bestowed [to your state], the foundation of [your] territory is prosperous. Following Chumong’s 朱蒙 auspiciousness of cultivating lands, you became the ruler. Following Kija’s 箕子 footstep as vassal (*fan*), you are spreading grace and harmony. Your custom values the knowledge in literature, therefore you can supervise your people with ritual and righteousness. As your ethos is courageous and you revered military, you were able to administer [people] with strength and might. Taking care of the fief, it

⁴⁵⁸ Koryŏ sent envoys to the Liang court in 923, but it is not clear whether to define the ruler of Koryŏ as a vassal of Liang. See Chŏng Inji 鄭麟趾 et al., *Koryŏsa* 高麗史, 1, Taejo 1st year (918), 6th month. National Institute of Korean History Database, accessed July 20, 2022, (<http://db.history.go.kr/KOREA>). *Koryŏsa* was compiled during the Chosŏn dynasty under the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450).

⁴⁵⁹ According to *XWDS*, two envoys were sent to the Later Tang court in 923, during the reign of Zhuangzong, however, even the name of the king was not recorded due to the loss of the document. (*XWDS* 74:919)

⁴⁶⁰ The initial record goes back to 926 in *Koryŏsa*. See *Koryŏsa* 1, Taejo 9th year (926), 12th month. It is recorded that the Koryŏ court sent Chang Bin 張彬 to Later Tang in 926. However, there is no record in the Chinese sources that Jang Bin came to the Tang court in 926. However, this is a record of Chang Bin visiting the Later Tang court in 929 in *XWDS*. See *XWDS* 6:61.

⁴⁶¹ *WDHY* 13:12-1; *JWDS* 40:553; *XWDS* 6:61.

⁴⁶² *CFYG* 965:11355; *JWDS* 43:592.

became serene and peaceful. Thus, it became like even teeth and exuberant hair. You raged against sly barbarians' causing disasters, and you were willing to save the neighbor from hardship... Now, I am sending the emissary, Wang Qiong, who is Grand Chamberlain of the Imperial Squad, Yang Zhaoye, who is Deputy Chamberlain of the Imperial Treasury and Protocol Officer, and others to prepare for ritual with authorization tallies. With my command I install you as king of Koryŏ state. Ah! If you do something good, Heaven bestows upon you auspiciousness. If you do what is right, deities give you good will. Spears and shields should be used reverently in case of dangerous situation while unified system will become the foundation of grand stratagem, you will become a permanent vassal of [Later] Tang and receive status of king for generations. Proceed and follow the status, and you receive it respectfully.”⁴⁶³

...咨！爾權知高麗國王事建！身資雄勇，智達機鈴，冠邊城以挺生，負壯圖而閒出。山河有授，基址克豐。踵朱蒙啓土之禎，爲彼君長，履箕子作蕃之跡，宣乃惠和。俗厚知書，故能導之以禮義，風驍尙武，故能肅之以威嚴。提封於是謐寧，生聚以之完輯。而復行及唇齒，分篤皮毛。忿黠虜之挺祆，恤隣邦而救患...今遣使太僕卿王瓊，使副大府少卿兼通事舍人楊昭業等，持節備禮，冊命爾爲高麗國王。於戲！作善，天降之祥，守正，神祚之福。干戈，慎於危事，文軌，資於遠謀，永爲唐臣，世服王爵。往踐厥位，汝惟欽哉。

The Koryŏ court received this edict in the third month of 933. At the beginning of edict, Mingzong refers to Wang Kŏn not as king of Koryŏ state but as “the deputy King of Koryŏ state.” Before this edict was issued, Wang Kŏn was always called “king of Koryŏ” 高麗王 (Ch. Gaoli wang). In 929, when Koryŏ sent envoys to Later Tang, both *JWDS* and *XWDS* show that envoys were sent by “king of Koryŏ, Wang Kŏn” 高麗王王建.⁴⁶⁴ This shows that the Later Tang court had already recognized Wang Kŏn as king of Koryŏ, however, decided to temporarily change his designation to deputy at the time of installation so that officially, they would have bestowed upon him the designation of king of Koryŏ state.

Even though there were several encounters between the two states before 933, the Later Tang court did not seem to be interested in Koryŏ. When Mingzong received delegations from

⁴⁶³ *Koryŏsa* 2, Taejo 16th year (933), 3rd month; *Quan Tang Wen* 108:1104-1.

⁴⁶⁴ *JWDS* 40:553; *XWDS* 6:61.

the Koryŏ court in 928, the Later Tang court did not seem to have a regulation in place to respond to this hospitality. According to *WDHY*, since Koryŏ had not sent any envoys before, the Institute of Academicians was not able to decide what to call the ruler of Koryŏ. They were unsure not only about the designation, but also which color of paper should be used or how to wrap the paper. After discussions, the Tang court decided to follow the precedents of Shilla and Parhae.⁴⁶⁵ At the time, the Later Tang court decided to define the relationship between the two states retrospectively based on the former relationship between Tang and Koguryŏ in the seventh century when Taizong pacified Koguryŏ.⁴⁶⁶ This new relationship was used to legitimize the Later Tang court as the successor of the Tang dynasty. From the perspective of the Later Tang court, Koryŏ's request for friendly relations was an opportunity to distinctively differentiate their political identity from the Khitans. Ever since the foundation of Koryŏ, Koryŏ maintained diplomatic relations with the Khitans and the Five Dynasties. However, starting from 942, Koryŏ officially terminated their friendly relations with the Khitans by starving the camels sent from the Liao court to death under Manbugyo Bridge as well as exiling the Khitan envoys.⁴⁶⁷

After a long description of Wang Kŏn as a man of resources, the edict declares Koryŏ as the successor state of Koguryŏ, one of three ancient Korean kingdoms. Mingzong distinguishes

⁴⁶⁵ *WDHY* 13:12-1.

⁴⁶⁶ It was actually Gaozong who conquered Koguryŏ.

⁴⁶⁷ In the tenth month of 942, the Liao court sent fifty camels as a token of friendly relations. However, Taejo 太祖 (Wang Kŏn) starved the camels to death. According to *Koryŏsa*, Taejo turned down the camels because Liao overthrew Parhae. However, considering that Parhae had been destroyed since 926, it is a nominal excuse to renounce the previous relationship with Liao. See *Koryŏsa* 2, Taejo 25th year (942), 10th month. Since Abaoji dispatched the military to Parhae in the twelfth month in 925, it took two months for the Khitan to destroy Parhae. In the second month of 926, Dongdan (namely "eastern Khitan") replaced Parhae. In the same month, according to *LS*, Koryŏ sent envoys to "provide tribute" (*gong*) to the Liao court. Also, there are cases that envoys were sent from Liao to Koryŏ. In 937 and 939, Liao sent envoys to the Koryŏ court.

Koryŏ from the “sly barbarians” (*xialu* 黠虜) generally used when referencing the Khitans.⁴⁶⁸ Since Koryŏ had absorbed drifting migrants from the north after Yelü Bei defeated Parhae, Koryŏ must have been afraid of the sudden growth of Khitans to the north. Another factor which presumably lead to the beginning of diplomatic relations between Later Tang and Koryŏ seems to be related to Later Paekche (892–936), another contemporary kingdom in Korean peninsula at the time. According to *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記), in 927, Later Paekche received thirty-five envoys from the Liao court. Encountering wind on their way back to Liao, they went adrift and landed in Dengzhou 登州 of Later Tang. However, all of the envoys were killed there.⁴⁶⁹ Since there is no record about these emissaries in other sources, it is difficult to know if this caused a direct conflict either between Liao and Later Tang or between Later Tang and Later Paekche. However, considering there was on-going conflict between Later Tang and Liao as well as between Koryŏ and Later Paekche, it is highly likely that the alliance between Later Tang and Koryŏ was mutually beneficial. At the end of the edict, Mingzong articulates the hierarchical relationship between Tang and Koryŏ. He makes Wang Kŏn “an eternal servant” of the Tang court instead of conferring the generational title of king.

After Shi Jingtang overthrew Later Tang, Koryŏ kings received official installations from the Later Jin court. Wang Kŏn received an official installation from the Later Jin court in 941.⁴⁷⁰ In 945, two years after Wang Kŏn’s son, Wang Mu 王武 (r. 921-943), succeeded his father, Chudi officially installed Wang Mu as king of Koryŏ state. When Wang Mu was installed, his

⁴⁶⁸ In *ZZTJ*, the terminology, “sly barbarian” (*xialu* 黠虜), was used to refer to the Khitan people during this period (*ZZTJ* 285:9312).

⁴⁶⁹ Kim Pusik 金富軾, *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 50, Kyŏn Hwŏn (927), National Institute of Korean History Database, accessed July 20, 2022, <http://db.history.go.kr/id/sg>.

⁴⁷⁰ *CFYG* 965:11356; *JWDS* 79:1048.

status was changed from “deputy King of Koryŏ state” to “king of Koryŏ state.”⁴⁷¹ The fourth ruler of Koryŏ, Wang So 王昭 (r. 949-975) was also installed as king of Koryŏ state by Taizu of Later Zhou in 952.⁴⁷²

In accordance with the precedent set during the Tang dynasty, the rulers of the “Four Barbarians” were quickly and smoothly installed as “king of state” compared to the rulers of the Ten Kingdoms. Although the kingdoms which were considered as the “Four Barbarians” became vassals of Five Dynasties, they enjoyed unhampered independence. Koryŏ was not a target of conquest by Five Dynasties but was rather a key ally of states in North China’s fight against both their common enemy, the Khitans.

(2) Shilla

Like the relations between the Five Dynasties and Koryŏ, Shilla also maintained diplomatic relations with the Five Dynasties, specifically Later Tang. Before the Five Dynasties, Shilla kings were usually invested as “king of state” by the Tang court. For instance, when the mother of King Hyejong (r. 765-780) of Shilla was installed as the queen dowager (*taifei* 太妃) by Daizong (r. 762-779) of Tang, *JTS* recorded King Hyejong as “king of Shilla state.”⁴⁷³ Later, Dezong (r. 779-805) of Tang also installed King Sosŏng (r. 798-800) as “king of Shilla state.”⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ *CFYG* 965:11356; *JWDS* 84:1111. According to *Koryŏsa*, in 944 Koryŏ sent envoys to the Later Jin court to inform that the new king was installed (*Koryŏsa* 2 Hyejong 1st year (944), unknown). In 945, Chudi sent an edict to install Wang Mu as king of Koryŏ state. See *Koryŏsa* 2 Hyejong 2nd year (945), unknown.

⁴⁷² *CFYG* 965:11356; *JWDS* 112:1480. According to *Koryŏsa*, the actual installation seemed to be held in 953. Two envoys, Wang Yan 王演 and Lü Jiyun 呂繼贇, were dispatched for the installation (*Koryŏsa* 2, Kwangjong 4th year (953), unknown).

⁴⁷³ *JTS* 11:288.

⁴⁷⁴ *JTS* 13:392.

Official relations between the Five Dynasties and Shilla started during the reign of Zhuangzong. When Shilla sent envoys to the Later Tang court, *XWDS* articulated that it was from the “the king of Shilla state.”⁴⁷⁵ Some sources mixed their uses of “king of state” (*guowang*) and “king” (*wang*). For example, *CFYG* used “king” more often but recorded “king of state” in the fascicle of “Installation” (*fengce* 封册). Even though there are many records of tribute from Shilla kings, it is uncertain whether the rulers of Five Dynasties officially installed the Shilla kings or not. Unlike Koryŏ kings who were officially installed by Five Dynasties, no records show if the enthronement of Shilla kings were conducted or approved by the Five Dynasties. On the other hand, there is a record that the king of Shilla was installed by Qian Liu, the king of Wuyue state. *SGCQ* and *XWDS* record that after Qian Liu became king of Wuyue state, he immediately dispatched envoys to install overseas monarchs (*junzhang* 君長). At that time, not only the king of Shilla but also the king of Parhae was installed.⁴⁷⁶

However, records of sending envoys to provide tribute appears not only in Chinese sources but also in Korean sources. *Samguk sagi*’s records show that Shilla paid tribute to the Later Tang court in the seventh month of 923. When Shilla court sent Kim Rak 金樂 and Kim Yukyŏng 金幼卿 to pay tribute (*gong*), Zhuangzong bestowed (*ci*) gifts based on their rank.⁴⁷⁷ In addition, a Shilla official was also recorded to have privately sent envoys to the Later Tang court. In 927, Wang Pongkyu 王逢規, who was the deputy of the Prefect of the Kangchu 康州, sent envoys to Mingzong and received the “general” office.⁴⁷⁸ Given that the Shilla king was already

⁴⁷⁵ *XWDS* 5:46.

⁴⁷⁶ *XWDS* 67:840; *SGCQ* 78:17-1.

⁴⁷⁷ *Samguk sagi* 12, King Kyŏngmyŏng 7th year (923), 3rd month.

⁴⁷⁸ *Samguk sagi* 12, King Kyŏng’ae 4th year (927), 3rd month; *CFYG* 972: 11421-2; *WDHY* 30:10-2.

Wang Pongkyu firstly appears as a Military Governor of Ch’ŏnchu in *XWDS*. He paid tribute to the Tang court in the first month of 924 (*XWDS* 5:46; *SGSG* 12).

installed by Qian Liu, the Later Tang court most likely decided that empowering the regional bases of Shilla was more favorable. After Shilla was incorporated by Wang Kōn into Koryō in 935, there are no further records of relations between Shilla and Five Dynasties. However, it is certain that the Later Tang court recognized the Shilla kings as “king of Shilla state.”

The “Middle Kingdom” in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period

Before examining the diminishing of the Middle Kingdom through the use of the above categorized diplomatic relations, we need to ascertain whether the Five Dynasties during this time can be singularly considered the “Middle Kingdom.” As seen before during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, although there existed a multitude of smaller states, the efforts of multiple states to legitimate themselves as the Middle Kingdom proved the existence of one whole larger Middle Kingdom. Can a similar understanding of the Middle Kingdom be applied to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period?

To grasp the meaning of the Middle Kingdom during this period, we must first trace the conception of the designation of the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms. It was Xue Juzheng, a scholar-official who served in the courts of the Later Jin, Later Han, Later Zhou, and Song dynasties, who first created a distinction among the states in his *JWDS*, the first official history of the Five Dynasties. In the Annals 本紀, he compiled the history of Song’s designated predecessors, the Five Dynasties, and he intentionally separated the other kingdoms into a separate Biographies volume where he assorted these kingdoms into “Hereditary House” (*shixi* 世襲) or “Presumptuous Installation” (*jianwei* 僭偽). A century later, we witness the first

reference to the “Ten Kingdoms” from Ouyang Xiu’s preface for his *Chronicle for the Hereditary Houses of the Ten Kingdoms* 十國世家年譜 in *XWDS*.

Amongst the Ten Kingdoms in the Five Dynasties period, seven of them called themselves emperors and changed their designations to imperial reigns. Wuyue, Jing, and Chu always adhered to the reign names of the Middle Kingdom... Because the Ten Kingdoms did not belong to the Middle Kingdom, whether they called themselves emperors or not, or if they changed their reign names or not, these are not worthy of detailed discussion. Therefore, I list of them here together. [I] wrote *Chronicle for the Hereditary Houses of the Ten Kingdoms*.⁴⁷⁹

五代十國，稱帝改元者七。吳越、荊、楚，常行中國年號。… 十國皆非中國有也，其稱帝改元與不，未足較其得失，故並列之。作十國世家年譜。

In this passage, Ouyang Xiu specifies why he created a separate chronicle to record the reign names of the Ten Kingdoms. He considered the Ten Kingdoms to be entities entirely removed from the “Middle Kingdom,” therefore recording the reign names of each state in a separate chronicle rather than in the Annals. Moreover, by listing all Ten Kingdoms under one category, he relegates the states as inconsequential. Both Xue Juzheng and Ouyang Xiu clearly imposed a distinct boundary between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms, with Ouyang Xiu additionally asserting the differentiating criterion as the “Middle Kingdom.”

In all three sources *JWDS*, *XWDS* and *ZZTJ*, the “Middle Kingdom” is restricted to North China. In other words, only the geographical domains of the Five Dynasties were considered the Middle Kingdom by Xue Juzheng and Ouyang Xiu. This restriction can be seen in records referring to diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and Liao. For example, when Yelü Bei defected to the Later Tang court, *XWDS* states that “when the king of Dongdan fled to the Middle Kingdom, for this reason, Khitan asked for friendly relations.”⁴⁸⁰ Another example can

⁴⁷⁹ *XWDS* 71:873.

⁴⁸⁰ *XWDS* 56:645.

be seen in a comparison of Shi Jingtang and Shi Chonggui, by Jing Yanguang 景延廣, a Later Jin general who pursued an equal relationship with Liao. He states that “whilst the former emperor was appointed by Northern Dynasty (*beichao*), the current emperor was installed by the Middle Kingdom.”⁴⁸¹ He designates Later Jin as the Middle Kingdom and Liao as the Northern Dynasty.

Sources dealing with the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms also restrict the “Middle Kingdom” geographically to the domain of the Five Dynasties. For example, in *XWDS* it is mentioned that Wuyue and Later Han were not in communication with one another. Specifically, “at the time, [the regions between] Yangzi and Huai Rivers did not communicate with each other, the envoys [sent by] the Qian Liu of Wuyue often crossed the sea and came to the Middle Kingdom.”⁴⁸² In this record, the Middle Kingdom is Later Han while Wuyue state is mentioned by its state name. Especially the records of the Ten Kingdoms in *JWDS* and *XWDS*, where the Ten Kingdoms are categorized under “Biographies of Presumptuous Installation” or “Hereditary House” respectively in *JWDS* and *XWDS*, further bolster this conception of the Middle Kingdom. In the Biography of Li Jing 李景 in *JWDS*, the Southern Tang court sent envoys to the “northern barbarians” (*beirong* 北戎), which caused trouble for the “Middle Kingdom.”⁴⁸³ Also, in the Biography of Wang Shenzhi, the distance between Min and the “Middle Kingdom” was mentioned.⁴⁸⁴ Wang Shenzhi’s Min was not considered a part of the Middle Kingdom.

⁴⁸¹ *JWDS* 88:1144; *XWDS* 29:322; *CFYG* 446:5298-1.

⁴⁸² *XWDS* 30:335.

⁴⁸³ *JWDS* 134:1787.

⁴⁸⁴ *JWDS* 134:1792. “At the time, as the Yang family occupied Yangzhi and Huai Rivers, Min was distant from the Middle Kingdom, Shenzhi annually paid tribute to [the Middle Kingdom]...” 是時，楊氏據江、淮，故閩中與中國隔越，審知每歲朝貢…。 Southern Han’s case is also similar. The relations

Not only sources compiled by Song historians, but also *LS*, the only extant source that can be considered as a faithful substitute to the original Khitan records as previously stated in Chapter 3, contributes to this conception of the Middle Kingdom. This specific designation appears in a monologue by Liao Taizong.

Taizong helped Shi [Jingtang] to rule the Middle Kingdom. On his way back from Luzhou to enter Youzhou, he visited the Great Mercy Pavilion (*dabeige*), pointed to a statue, and said, “In my dream, immortal commanded [me] to send Mister Shi [Jingtang] to become Emperor of the Middle Kingdom. It is [the immortal].”⁴⁸⁵

太宗援石晉主中國，自潞州回，入幽州，幸大悲閣，指此像曰：「我夢神人令送石郎為中國帝，即此也。」

In this anecdote, Taizong mentions the Middle Kingdom twice, both times in reference to North China. A similar record appears in the Biography of Zhang Li 張礪. Zhang Li, who received an office under Liao Taizong’s court, advises Taizong how to rule over the “Middle Kingdom.”

Entering Bian[zhou], as a group of Yelü Langwu and Mada killed and looted, Zhang [Li] said, “Now Great Liao gained the Middle Kingdom, [you] should let people of the Middle Kingdom rule it. [You should] not use people of our state (*guo*) and closest courtiers...” The emperor did not listen.⁴⁸⁶

入汴，諸將蕭翰、耶律郎五、麻答輩肆殺掠，礪奏曰：「今大遼始得中國，宜以中國人治之，不可專用國人及左右近習。…」上不聽。

After Liao’s conquest of Later Jin, Zhang Li advises Taizong that the “Middle Kingdom” should not be directly ruled by the Khitan people. Rather, it should be governed by the people of the “Middle Kingdom.” When referring to the conquered region as the Middle Kingdom, he is

between Southern Han and Later Tang is described as that between Nanhai 南海 and the Middle Kingdom (*JWDS* 135:1808).

⁴⁸⁵ *LS* 37:446.

⁴⁸⁶ *LS* 76:1252; *ZZTJ* 285:9319-9320.

clearly naming Later Jin, excluding the Ten Kingdoms to the south. *ZZTJ* records the same dialogue but rather uses “all-under-heaven” (*tianxia*) along with the “Middle Kingdom.” From the perspective of the Khitans, the domain of Five Dynasties was solely considered the Middle Kingdom.

Then, what did the people of the various Ten Kingdoms think of the Middle Kingdom? Like the Southern Dynasties of the early medieval period, did they recognize themselves as the “Middle Kingdom?” Some of their perspectives can be deduced from the Song historiographies *JWDS*, *ZZTJ*, and *XWDS*. In the fifth month of 924, Li Yan 李嚴, who was dispatched to the Shu court as an envoy in the fourth month, returned to the Later Tang court. Although he was supposed to bring valuable goods from the Shu court, he ended up bringing “goods entering into the wild” (*rucaowu*).

On the *wushen* day, the lord of Shu sent Li Yan back. In the beginning, when Emperor made [Li] Yan enter Shu, [Emperor] ordered [him] to get valuable goods from the palace by selling horses. However, it was prohibited by Law of Shu for silk and embroidered silk to enter the Middle Kingdom; [only] shoddy goods were allowed to enter the Middle Kingdom, which was called “goods entering into the wild.” Emperor heard it as [Li] Yan returned, he became angry and said, ‘Would Wang Yan be able to avoid becoming the ‘person who entered into the wild’ (*rucaozhiren*)? Following the saying, [Li] Yan told Emperor, “[Wang] Yan is foolish and self-indulgent so that he does not administer the affairs, excluding convention-ridden old men but palling around with mean people...”⁴⁸⁷

戊申，蜀主遣李嚴還。初，帝因嚴入蜀，令以馬市宮中珍玩，而蜀法禁錦綺珍奇不得入中國，其粗惡者乃聽入中國，謂之「入草物」。嚴還，以聞，帝怒曰：「王衍寧免為入草之人乎！」嚴因言於帝曰：「衍童騃荒縱，不親政務，斥遠故老，昵比小人。…」

In this conversation, Zhuangzong became angry for two reasons. First, he was not able to obtain valuable goods from Shu, only receiving two hundred *liang* of gold, mats used for ceremony

⁴⁸⁷ Here, I translated *ZZTJ*'s version. *ZZTJ* 273:2891; *JWDS* 33:454; *XWDS* 26:284.

(*diyi* 地衣), and woolen blackets (*maobu* 毛布).⁴⁸⁸ Second, he did not like the fact that the Middle Kingdom was called “wild” (*cao*). Zhuangzong implied that Shu could be conquered so Wang Yan would be treated as “a man into the wild” (*rucaozhiren*). In comparison, *XWDS* also mentioned that the items sent to the Middle Kingdom were called “goods entering into the wild” (*rucaowu*) while *JWDS* does not directly designate Later Tang as the Middle Kingdom, but rather “east” (*dong* 東) or “zhongxia” 中夏.⁴⁸⁹ After combining these sources, the eventual conclusion is that Shu recognized the Later Tang court as the Middle Kingdom, and in turn, indirectly does not consider themselves as the Middle Kingdom.⁴⁹⁰ It is important to note that they additionally use the derogatory terminology—the wild (*cao*)—to designate Later Tang.

This next example depicts a conversation between two future chancellors of Later Zhou and Southern Tang speaking about the Middle Kingdom. For context, this conversation takes place when the future chancellor of Southern Tang, Han Xizai 韓熙載 (902-970), was about to flee to the Wu court because of his father’s execution in the Later Tang court. Before his departure to Wu, Han Xizai had a drink with his good friend Li Gu 李穀.

[Han] Xizai told [Li] Gu, “If East of River (Jiangzou) uses me as chancellor, [I will] definitely gallop a horse to conquer the Central Plain.” [Li] Gu replied, “If the Middle Kingdom uses me as chancellor, taking South of River (Jiangnan) will be as easy as finding an item from a sack.” When Later Zhou military was about to conquer the Huai [region, Li] Gu was ordered to become a general. [Li Gu] obtained South of Huai, while [Han] Xizai could not accomplish [what he promised].⁴⁹¹

熙載謂穀曰：「江左用吾為相，當長驅以定中原。」穀曰：「中國用吾為相，取江南如探囊中物爾。」及周師之征淮也，命穀為將，以取淮南，而熙載不能有所為也。

⁴⁸⁸ The list of items which Li Yan brought to the Later Tang court from Shu can be seen in *XWDS*.

⁴⁸⁹ It probably reflects the rise of “Chinese consciousness” in Song dynasty. Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, 159.

⁴⁹⁰ Another interpretation is possible in which the Tang envoy summarized the Shu law. In this case, it reflects the Later Tang’s perspective of the “Middle Kingdom.”

⁴⁹¹ *XWDS* 62:778-779; *ZZTJ* 275:8992; *NTS* [M] 13:93-94; *SGCQ* 28:1-2.

Both Han Xizai and Li Gu rodomontade about how they would contribute to their own respective states. Han Xizai uses “East of River” to refer to the Wu court and the “Central Plain” to refer to Later Tang. On the contrary, Li Gu refers to Wu as “South of River” and the Later Tang as the “Middle Kingdom.” *XWDS*, *ZZTJ*, Ma Ling’s *History of Southern Tang (NTS)*, and *SQCQ* similarly record this anecdote while *JWDS* leaves no record. Except *ZZTJ*, which records Han Xizai’s designation of the Wu court as “Wu” and Li Gu’s use of the “Middle Kingdom” as the “Central Plain,” all the other sources followed *XWDS*’s version.⁴⁹² Considering that Han Xizai later represents the Wu/Southern Tang courts, his use of the Central Plain versus Li Gu’s use of the Middle Kingdom seems to be crucial. Unlike the northern states-focused sources, the southern states-focused sources including Ma Ling’s *NTS*, Lu You’s *History of Southern Tang (NTS)*, and Long Gun’s *Unofficial History of Jiangnan (JNYS)* barely use the “Middle Kingdom” but rather primarily use the “Central Plain” to designate the contemporaneous northern states and their state names.⁴⁹³

Another similar perspective of the Middle Kingdom can be found in Southern Han. In Biography of Liu Zhi 劉陟, *JWDS*, and *ZZTJ*, a Southern Han ruler describes a contemporary northern ruler as a mere prefect.

Every time when [Liu Zhi] meets northern people, he mentioned that he originally came from Xianyang of Qin and was ashamed of being a ruler of “southern barbarians”

⁴⁹² Prior to *XWDS*, the anecdote is not seen in other sources including Tao Yue’s 陶岳 *Supplement to the History of the Five Dynasties (Wudai shi bu 五代史補)* and Lu Zhen’s 路振 *Records of the Nine States (Jiuguo zhi 九國志)*.

⁴⁹³ For instance, Lu You’s *NTS* did not use the term “Middle Kingdom” while the “Central Plain” was used to designate the northern states. Ma Ling used the “Middle Kingdom” one time when quoting Pan You’s 潘佑 writing directly. Ma Ling’s *NTS* also barely used the “Middle Kingdom” compared to the “Central Plain.”

(*manyi*). In addition, he referred to the emperors of the Middle Kingdom as “Prefect of Luo Prefecture,” a type who absurdly has a big self-esteem.⁴⁹⁴

每對北人自言家本咸秦，恥為蠻夷之主。又呼中國帝王為洛州刺史，其妄自尊大，皆此類也。

Liu Zhi’s use of a double standard when referring to the northern ruler comes to light in this passage. He was ashamed of being a ruler of the “southern barbarians” (*manyi*). It is uncertain whether the expression, “southern barbarians,” was exactly repeated by him or not. However, considering his northern ancestry, he must have been somewhat resentful of his stay in the south. Second, he mockingly designated the emperors of northern state as Prefects of Luo Prefecture, showing his awareness that the Later Tang ruler was residing in Luoyang. As a northerner, Liu Zhi was probably nostalgic of the Central Plain and bitter that he had no control over the Middle Kingdom. Yet conclusively, even with his northern ancestry, he indirectly admits that the southern territory he reigns over is not the Middle Kingdom.

During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, the concept of the Middle Kingdom has changed dramatically from prior periods. During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, the Middle Kingdom was predominantly used to refer to the Five Dynasties, with the occasional usage of referring to all the northern states. Interestingly, Southern-derived sources preferred using the “Central Plain” rather than the “Middle Kingdom.” The use of the “Central Plain” as a synecdoche to substitute for the “Middle Kingdom” was prevalent during this period. In any case, the Middle Kingdom was restricted to the territory of North China and the Five Dynasties, excluding both the territory of Liao and the Ten Kingdoms.

⁴⁹⁴ *JWDS* 135:1809; *ZZTJ* 283:9236; *XWDS* 65:812.

Conclusion

During the periods of the Northern and Southern dynasties and the Tang dynasty, the Middle Kingdom's span included regions to the far south and even parts of the Silk Road. Specifically, the two "Middle Kingdoms" of the Northern and Southern dynasties became the slightly larger united "Middle Kingdom" of the Tang dynasty. However, after the fall of the Tang dynasty, the Middle Kingdom became a victim of the expansion of the "barbarian" world. The rulers of the Five Dynasties lost their grip over the Ten Kingdoms, consisting of only a severely reduced portion of the Middle Kingdom of prior periods, with most of its rulers having to adapt to a transforming *realpolitik* with the surrounding states. During the Five Dynasties period, kings and officials, in not only the Five Dynasties but also the Ten Kingdoms and Khitan state, seem to have reached a new understanding of what the "Middle Kingdom" meant: it came to designate a much smaller area (North China) than it did in the Tang. In this chapter, by thoroughly examining the diplomatic relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms alongside the installation processes of the Ten Kingdoms and two of the "Four Barbarians," I show that the "Middle Kingdom" of the time shrank after the fall of the Tang dynasty. I distinguished the installation of a ruler as prince or king (*wang*) from "king of state" (*guowang*). Since "state" (*guo*) was previously only used for the regimes of the "Four Barbarians," the Five Dynasties knowingly certified the shrinking of the Middle Kingdom by installing rulers of neighboring states as "king of state." By taking lands previously considered part of the Middle Kingdom, christening them as separate states, and installing rulers of states as "kings of states," the Middle Kingdom of this period shrank while the world of the "Four Barbarians" expanded.

Granted, recognizing neighboring states as “state” was inevitable for the Five Dynasties because of their limited control over these regimes. Installing “kings of states” was a rational decision for the Five Dynasties since rather than watch the rulers of these neighboring states spontaneously declare their own emperorships without any input from the Middle Kingdom, it at least appeared as if the Five Dynasties had some control over the affairs of these neighboring states.

Compared to Koryŏ and Shilla, two of the “barbarians” (*siyi*) states, which enjoyed independence under the lord-vassal relationship, most of the Ten Kingdoms were able to find their own independence within their relationships with the Five Dynasties. Among the Ten Kingdoms, with exception to Jingnan and Chu, the rest of the “kingdoms” either had their rulers installed as king of state by more powerful states or became independent by themselves without the blessings or permission from the states in North China. Just as Zhu Wen confirmed equal relations with Former Shu and compared both states to Wei and Shu Han retrospectively, states independently declaring their own emperorship propagated throughout the period. Ever since Modi of Later Liang made the exceptional case of making Qian Liu “king of Wuyue state” in the second month of 923, ensuing rulers of the Five Dynasties continued to follow this precedent. Especially during Later Tang, the installation of king of states became frequent. In 924, Qian Liu, whom already had been king of Wuyue state, boldly demanded a recertification of the same status. In 925, Liu Yan declared himself “king of the Great Han State.”⁴⁹⁵ Through the process of recognizing neighboring regimes as “state,” the Five Dynasties grew farther apart from the former ideal concept of the Middle Kingdom which consisted of the ancient Nine Provinces or

⁴⁹⁵ See Appendix 4. Likewise, in 926, Wang Yanhan installed himself as king of the Great Min State. In 927, Mingzong promoted Ma Yin from King of Chu to King of Chu State. Moreover, in the same year, Yang Longyan who already installed himself as the King of Wu State in 919 declared himself as Emperor of Wu.

Twelve Provinces. Does the period designation, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, withstand such a *realpolitik*?

As previously stated, Ouyang Xiu coined the period designation of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period by mentioning them together. Ouyang Xiu stated that the Ten Kingdoms were not a part of the “Middle Kingdom” and yet could not admit that they were “barbarians.” In the epilogue of Chronicle for the Hereditary Houses of the Ten Kingdoms in *XWDS*, Ouyang Xiu responded to questions he received about the Ten Kingdoms during the late-eleventh century.

Someone asked, “The Kingdoms certainly did not belong to the Middle Kingdom, however, there were some states which received investiture with titles, so that they used reign name of the Middle Kingdom and came to pay tribute. [But] they were not written in the Annals, why is that?” I answered, “I did not record the states which received investiture with titles in order to show they do not belong to the Middle Kingdom. They provided tribute like ‘barbarians’ (*yidi*), but recording ‘barbarians’ [in the Annal] is too much.”

或問：十國固非中國有也，然猶命以封爵，而稱中國年號來朝貢者，亦有之矣，本紀之不書，何也？曰：封爵之不書，所以見其非中國有也。其朝貢之來如夷狄，以夷狄書之則甚矣。

Someone said, “The ‘Four Barbarians’ (*siyi*) and Ten Kingdoms, both of them did not belong to the Middle Kingdom, but the reception of investiture with titles and tribute of the ‘Four Barbarians’ were recorded while those of Ten Kingdoms were not recorded, why is that?” I answered, “If the Middle Kingdom consider them as ‘barbarians,’ it is possible to consider them as ‘barbarians.’ If we examine the Ten Kingdoms from the perspective of the Five Dynasties rulers, they cannot be considered ‘barbarians.’ For this reason, Ten Kingdoms’ reception of investiture with titles and paying tribute were not comparable to those of ‘barbarians,’ so [I] did not record it. If I record them like ‘barbarians,’ the rulers of Five Dynasties cannot consider them as ‘barbarians.’ For these reasons, I excluded and did not record them, so that they were naturally separated from the Middle Kingdom.”⁴⁹⁶

問者曰：四夷、十國，皆非中國之有也，四夷之封爵朝貢則書，而十國之不書何也？曰：以中國而視夷狄，夷狄之可也。以五代之君而視十國，夷狄之則未可也。

⁴⁹⁶ *XWDS* 71:881.

故十國之封爵、朝貢，不如夷狄，則無以書之。書如夷狄，則五代之君未可以夷狄之也。是以外而不書，見其自絕於中國焉爾。

It is highly likely that these questions were asked by contemporaries of Ouyang Xiu. They asked whether the Ten Kingdom were barbarians or not. Ouyang Xiu straightforwardly answered that although the Ten Kingdoms did not belong to the Middle Kingdom, they were not considered as barbarians. This was derived from *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 in which it defines the boundary called “zhuxia” 諸夏 between the Middle Kingdom and “barbarians” (*siyi*). Ouyang Xiu’s Middle Kingdom corresponds to that of the Spring and Autumn period when fiefdoms became independent. In this context, he places the Ten Kingdoms in an ambiguous space where they do not belong to either the “civilized” world or the “barbarian” world.

However, Ouyang Xiu’s designation of the Ten Kingdoms does not accurately describe the *realpolitik* for three reasons. First, the Five Dynasties officially recognized the independence of the surrounding states. Starting from Taizu of Later Liang, who allowed for the independence of Former Shu, the rest of the rulers of the Five Dynasties were steadfast in their confirmations of the independence of surrounding states. Secondly, many of the Ten Kingdoms did not receive installations. For example, the rulers of Former Shu, Later Shu, Wu, Southern Tang, Southern Han, and Northern Han installed themselves as emperors and claimed diplomatic parity with the Five Dynasties. They could not be considered defenders or vassals of the Five Dynasties. Third, the period of Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms was only completed in late-tenth century. Interestingly, none of the compiled histories before *XDWS* clearly labeled these surrounding states as the Ten Kingdoms. For instance, when *JWDS* was compiled, Northern Han and Southern Tang were not yet conquered by the Song court. When *XWDS* was compiled, the Song

court already completed the reunification of the states, so could re-define the relations between the Five Dynasties and other states.

Here lies the paradox in Ouyang Xiu's designation, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. Ouyang Xiu adamantly denied that the Ten Kingdoms are part of the Middle Kingdom but could not seem to separate the Ten Kingdoms from the Middle Kingdom. This betrays a double standard that Ouyang Xiu held at the time; one in terms of legitimation and the other in terms of “*re*”unification. In order to legitimate the Song dynasty as the successors to the Middle Kingdom, Ouyang Xiu emphasized that the Five Dynasties were the sole proprietors of the Middle Kingdom and therefore makes the Song dynasty the sole successors of the Middle Kingdom. However, in order to make the argument that the Song dynasty accomplished a “*re*”unification rather than just a unification, and in turn make the Song dynasty the rightful heir to all of the former Tang territory, Ouyang Xiu needed to somehow connect the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms. These standards are exclusive of one another. Under the legitimation standard, he should call this period the Five Dynasties period and relegate the Ten Kingdoms to the “barbarian” world. Under the “*re*”unification standard, this period should be called the Five Dynasties and Three Kingdoms period, relegating the seven kingdoms who declared themselves their own sovereign states to the “barbarian” world. This period oversaw a distinction between the Middle Kingdom and the other kingdoms as well as an expansion of the non-Middle Kingdom territory which was comparable to the territory of the “Four Barbarians,” redefined by Ouyang Xiu as “zhuxia.” With a *realpolitik* that induced the diminishing of the Middle Kingdom, the designation of “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms” does not accurately reflect the political reality of this period.

Chapter 5. The New Three Kingdoms: Reframing the Legacy of Tang

Introduction

In 936, when Later Jin succeeded Later Tang and took the mantle in the Middle Kingdom, a political aberration occurred. Yet another Tang successor appeared to the south in the Jiangnan (“south of Yangtze River”) region. It was Xu Zhigao’s 徐知誥 (r.937-943) Southern Tang (937-976), one of the Ten Kingdoms that replaced the Wu state. Ostensibly, two successor states of Tang co-existed at the same time. Furthermore, Later Jin subsequently suffered defeat at the hands of Khitan Liao, giving rise to a North China regime that welcomed its first nomadic ruler, Taizong of Liao (r.927-947). While the previous two chapters delved into the specifics of the diplomatic relations the Five Dynasties maintained with Liao and the surrounding kingdoms, respectively, this chapter rather takes a step back to look at the fundamentals of this period, and in the process, reframes the post-Tang world. Employing the definition of “Middle Kingdom” discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter examines three players and key events that define the macro-*realpolitik* of this period: Liao’s conquest of the “Middle Kingdom,” Southern Tang’s reclamation of the “Middle Kingdom,” and Northern Han as an important player in the fight for hegemony over the “Middle Kingdom.”

This chapter starts with Liao’s conquest of Later Jin which Song dynasty records describe as an interregnum or “absence of lord in the Central Plain” (*zhongyuan wuzhu* 中原無主), depicting Liao Taizong’s ascension as presumptuous.⁴⁹⁷ Was Liao’s occupation of North China truly an interregnum? Why was Liao’s occupation of North China so short-lived? After

⁴⁹⁷ *CFYG* 309:3649-2; *JWDS* 99:1324; *SGCQ* 53:9-1; *ZZTJ* 286:9339.

examining Liao's conquest of the "Middle Kingdom," I analyze Southern Tang's reclamation of North China and their constantly shifting policy on unification. I compare different records to access a multitude of perspectives. Lu You's *NTS*, Ma Ling's *NTS*, and Long Gun's *JNYS* provide abundant details absent from *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ*. I decipher the diplomatic language used between Liao and Southern Tang to supplement the relatively autochthonic viewpoints of the other sources which primarily focus on the Five Dynasties rather than the Ten Kingdoms.

Lastly, this chapter highlights Northern Han's struggle to restore North China in opposition to Later Zhou. Northern Han was one of the Ten Kingdoms and the last state established by the Shatuo Turks. The state has been neglected in scholarship not only because of the lack of sources but also due to its humbler significance when compared to its predecessor, the Later Han dynasty. Unlike Later Han, the Northern Han territory was limited to merely the modern Shanxi region. However, Northern Han should not be overlooked for at least three reasons. First, Northern Han was founded by the remainder of the Later Han imperial family, giving legitimacy to their participation in the struggle to reclaim the Middle Kingdom. Secondly, the state engaged in an intricate three-way relationship with Liao and Later Zhou/Song. Third and most importantly, unlike Later Han which existed for only four years, Northern Han existed for over three decades. The span of its existence itself makes Northern Han worthy of a closer study. Northern Han should be considered not only as a successor of Later Han, but also as an active participant in the power struggle for hegemony over the Middle Kingdom. Because of the lack of *emic* sources, most of the sources about Northern Han should be read from the consideration of *etic* perspectives.

I conclude by challenging the period designation, the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.” As contended in the previous chapter, this period designation, first conceptualized during the Song dynasty by the compiler Ouyang Xiu, fails to hold under scrutiny. Interestingly, prior period designations such as the “Three Kingdoms” (220–280) or the “Southern and Northern Dynasties” (386–589) were not named based on the obtainment of North China. Shu, Wu, and the southern dynasties were not geographically located in North China and were still considered equal thirds. Rather, these prior period designations were given such names to separate and categorize states based on their unification capacity/desire and stature in the *realpolitik*. In contrast, the period designation, the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms,” is extreme in its singular focus on the geographical criterion of possessing a portion of North China. More importantly, the designation is disparate considering the reality; people living in the Three Kingdoms and Southern and Northern dynasties knew that they were living in a period of the trichotomous division and south-north division respectively, but people living in the tenth century did not recognize that their period being distinguished as “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.”

Chiefly a method in which the Song dynasty could claim sovereignty over the whole extent of their territory, the period designation does not fully capture either the significant players or the happenings of the time. Most noticeably, the period name blatantly disregards Khitan Liao, a key player that was deeply involved in the regional power play and even briefly reigned over North China. Liao’s considerable influence over North China and its surrounding states at the time, more than qualifies it be part of the period name along with the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms. Additionally, the separation of “Five Dynasties” and “Ten Kingdoms” creates a distorted distinction between the two, portraying the “Five Dynasties” as one larger

mainstream of states surrounded by a group of minor states, the “Ten Kingdoms,” further implying the “Ten Kingdoms” inferiority to the Five Dynasties.

Following an integrationist worldview, I reject the Sinocentric period designation and set out to create a new moniker which embraces the reality of this period. I adopt a set of criteria used from the prior period designations the “Three Kingdoms” and the “Northern and Southern Dynasties” that underscore the dominant states of their respective times. The rulers of the Three Kingdoms as well as the rulers of the Northern and Southern dynasties self-identified themselves as emperors. Both of the sets of kingdoms created unification plans and/or actively pursued an expansion of territory. Most importantly, none of these states served as vassals to other states, displaying dominance in the regional power play. By using these three criterions of “self-recognition,” “unification desire,” and “relationships,” this chapter evaluates the significance of the states that existed in the period of time between Tang and Song.

When considering all the states in this period, it becomes readily apparent that not all of them held enough significance to be considered major players in the struggle for hegemony. For instance, Southern Tang’s strength is displayed through the creation of their own emperorship, while Jingnan 荆南 was considered to be a “parasite” state due to its weakness and wavering loyalty.⁴⁹⁸ Some states were proactive in the power games for hegemony while others had difficulty maintaining their territory. Some states were willing to become vassals of more powerful states while others independently had their rulers claim emperorship and pursue equal or superior relationships with surrounding states. Aside from the Five Dynasties, there were three other states which satisfy these conditions of significance—Liao, Southern Tang, and Northern Han. Liao enjoyed an equal or superior diplomatic relationship with the Five Dynasties, even

⁴⁹⁸ *XWDS* 69:859; *SGCQ* 11:5-6.

absorbing Later Jin into “Great Liao” 大遼 for a time. Southern Tang and Northern Han not only pursued an equal relationship with the Middle Kingdom, but also had the desire to reclaim it.⁴⁹⁹ By rigorously testing the aforementioned criteria, I conclusively suggest the new period designation—the “New Three Kingdoms.”

This New Three Kingdom model came to me from a conversation between Zhu Wen of Later Liang, the first of the Five Dynasties, and Wang Jian of Former Shu, one of the Ten Kingdoms. After receiving a delegation from Wang Jian, Zhu Wen replied with a letter suggesting friendly relations. In this letter, he likens their relationship to that of Han and Shu during the Three Kingdoms Period.

Then, I heard that Your Majesty, [my] eighth brother, occupied the western frontiers which extended to three circuits of Shu, and separately acceded to eulogistic status which deeply and highly restored the rule [over the regions.] At the moment, I celebrated the accession and two states wanted to have friendly relations. Based on Cao Cao and Liu Bei’s antecedent, [we respectively] have sovereigns and subjects, and following Chu and Han’s precedent, [we] divided the territory.⁵⁰⁰

尋聞皇帝八兄奄有西陲，盡朝三蜀，別尊位號，復統高深。一時皆賀於推崇，兩國願通於情好。徵曹劉之往制，各有君臣，追楚漢之前蹤，常分疆宇。

By addressing Wang Jian as his brother, Zhu Wen directly compares Wang Jian and himself to the rulers of the Three Kingdoms, who had shared *tianxia* after the demise of the Han dynasty. Specifically, he considers himself as Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220), who ruled over North China, while considering Wang Jian as Liu Bei whose territory was limited to the Shu region. Although

⁴⁹⁹ Chapter 4 is a study of all of the Ten Kingdoms and their diplomatic relations with other states and the Five Dynasties. As shown in the chapter, the rulers of the states Former Shu, Later Shu, Min, and Southern Han also used the “emperor” title fulfilling one of the criteria. However, there are no records showing these states engaging in or practicing policies indicating their desire to reunify the Middle Kingdom, eliminating them as contenders for the period designation.

⁵⁰⁰ *SGCQ* 36:10-1; *Quan Tang Wen* 102:1043-1.

I do not consider Wang Jian's Shu as a legitimate contender for the New Three Kingdoms model due to its lack of interest in re-unifying North China, this explicit reference to the Three Kingdoms of past and Zhu Wen's recognition of divided territory at the time served as the inspiration to my adoption of this terminology in the creation of the designation for this period.

Interregnum or A Newly Integrated Empire?

Prior to the year of 947 when the Khitans conquered Later Jin and Taizong of Liao ascended the throne as emperor in North China, the phrase, "absence of lord in the Central Plain" (*zhongyuan wuzhu*) was used for two distinct circumstances. The first case was when the ruler was physically not present in the Middle Kingdom. For instance, during the Huang Chao rebellion, when Emperor Xizong of Tang withdrew to the Shu 蜀 region, *zhongyuan wuzhu* was used because the emperor fled from the North China region.⁵⁰¹ The other case in which the phrase was used when there was a ruler in North China, however, the ruler was considered illegitimate. For example, when Shi Jingtang was installed as the emperor of Jin by Liao Taizong, Taizong issued an edict declaring Li Congke, then the emperor of Later Tang, as an illegitimate ruler.⁵⁰² When considering these two categories, Liao Taizong's case should be classified as the second category. Although Taizong was installed as emperor in North China in 947, the historians of the Song dynasty considered him illegitimate.

According to *JWDS*, after Taizong ascended the throne in the second month of 947, Liu Zhiyuan, the future emperor of Later Han, "offered up a tributary memorial" (*fengbiao*) to

⁵⁰¹ *JWDS* 14:192.

⁵⁰² *JWDS* 75:986.

Taizong and became a vassal of Taizong.⁵⁰³ Liu Zhiyuan subsequently betrayed Taizong's expectations later in the same month by declaring his emperorship in Taiyuan. However, *JWDS* regards Liu Zhiyuan's oath of servitude to Taizong as insignificant. Liu Zhiyuan's ascension as the successor to Shi Chonggui is justified by invoking "absence of lord in the Central Plain."⁵⁰⁴ In addition, *XWDS* explains that Liu Zhiyuan discussed the establishment of his own state in the first month of 947, after the Khitans successfully checkmated Later Jin. Liu Zhiyuan's envoy to Taizong, Wang Jun, told Liu Zhiyuan that eventually, the Khitans will not be able to maintain control of and acquire the Middle Kingdom.⁵⁰⁵ *ZZTJ* similarly describes the same scene with the slight variance that Liu Zhiyuan indirectly heard this from Guo Wei, one of Liu Zhiyuan's soldiers who later becomes the founding emperor of Later Zhou.⁵⁰⁶

The descriptions in both *JWDS* and *XWDS* do not recognize Taizong as a legitimate emperor of the "Middle Kingdom," rather choosing to label the period as *zhongyuan wuzhu*.⁵⁰⁷ Furthermore, even modern historians have confirmed this period as an interregnum.⁵⁰⁸ This section of the chapter will be detailing Taizong's conquest of the "Middle Kingdom" in three distinct parts: (1) an analysis of Song records concerning Taizong's motivation behind conquering North China by analyzing a conversation between Taizong and his mother, Emperor Dowager Shulü, (2) Taizong's ascension to the throne and acceptance by the Jin court, and (3) his will to continue ruling the "Middle Kingdom." By analyzing Taizong's conquest of North

⁵⁰³ *JWDS* 99:1324. However, it is recorded that Liu Zhiyuan offered up a tributary memorial to Taizong in the first month of 947 (*ZZTJ* 286: 9336).

⁵⁰⁴ *JWDS* 99:1324.

⁵⁰⁵ *XWDS* 10:100.

⁵⁰⁶ *ZZTJ* 286:9336.

⁵⁰⁷ According to *JWDS*, Taizong "falsely grant an amnesty to *tianxia*." (*weizhi dashe tianxia* 偽制大赦天下) (*JWDS* 137:1835).

⁵⁰⁸ For instance, Wang Gungwu also defined this five-month period as interregnum in his book, *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification 883-947*, 188.

China, I argue that the contemporary “Middle Kingdom” of the tenth century recognized and accepted Taizong as the legitimate ruler of the “Middle Kingdom.” Therefore, despite the later Song historians’ view that Taizong’s rule represents an era of “absence of lord in the Central Plain,” Taizong’s rule over the Middle Kingdom should not be considered as an interregnum.

Song Records Concerning Taizong’s Motivation: A Conversation Between Taizong and Empress Dowager Shulü

After Chudi (Shi Chonggui), the last emperor of Later Jin, refused to submit a “tributary memorial,” Taizong was quick in his decision to conquer the “Middle Kingdom.” Chudi, who was cornered, attempted to recover friendly relations with the Liao court by dispatching envoys to no avail. How did Song historians choose to record Taizong’s decision to conquer the Middle Kingdom? A conversation between Taizong and his mother, Emperor Dowager Shulü, provides some clarity to this question. This conversation is recorded in both *ZZTJ* and *A Treatise on the Kingdom of Khitan (QDGZ)*. The latter version is identical with the former, which confirms that *QDGZ* reused *ZZTJ*’s version. *LS*, however, does not have a record of this dialogue.

As the Khitans continuously invaded, the Middle Kingdom was tired of recovering the frontiers, [and] frontier people were covered all over with mud; the Khitan people and [their] animals also died in large numbers so people in the state resented the situation. Empress Dowager Shulü told the Khitan ruler, “Is it appropriate to make a Han person the ruler of *hu* (Khitan) [people]?” [The Khitan ruler] said, “It is not possible.” Empress Dowager said, “then for what reason do you want to become the ruler of Han [people]?” [He] said, “the Shi family (Chudi) reneged favor, which is unacceptable.” Empress Dowager said, “Now, even if you could acquire territory of the Han [people], you could not live there. If there is any fiasco, there is no use to regret!” [She] also said to several subordinates, “How could the Han child sleep on one side? I have heard that from ancient times, Han [initiated] friendly relations with *fan*, but I have not heard of *fan* [initiating] friendly relations with Han. If the Han child changes his mind [and initiates friendly

relations with us again], how could I feel regrettable about [re-]entering friendly relations with [them]!⁵⁰⁹

契丹連歲入寇，中國疲於奔命，邊民塗地；契丹人畜亦多死，國人厭苦之。述律太后謂契丹主曰：「使漢人為胡主，可乎？」曰：「不可。」太后曰：「然則汝何故欲為漢主？」曰：「石氏負恩，不可容。」太后曰：「汝今雖得漢地，不能居也；萬一蹉跌，悔何所及！」又謂其羣下曰：「漢兒何得一向眠！自古但聞漢和蕃，未聞蕃和漢。漢兒果能回意，我亦何惜與和！」

This passage starts off with an explanation of the damages and the agony war brought to both sides before delineating the conversation between Taizong and Empress Dowager Shulü. The conversation reveals that Chudi's betrayal is Taizong's main reason for deciding to conquer the Middle Kingdom. Empress Dowager Shulü then dissuades Taizong from conquering the Middle Kingdom because she believes that even if Taizong could actually defeat Later Jin, maintaining rule over the Middle Kingdom would be difficult. She goes on to express sympathy for "the Han child," (Han *er*) or Chudi, the emperor of Later Jin. According to Hu Sanxing, sleeping on one side means sleeping comfortably. It is implied that Chudi could not fall asleep on one side because he was worried and feared an attack by the Khitans. By generalizing the prior relations between non-Han and Han, Empress Dowager Shulü suggests that if Chudi changed his mind and attempted to reinitiate friendly relations with the Khitans, there would be no reason for her to regret a continuation of friendly relations with Later Jin. However, did this recorded conversation accurately reflect the situation at the time?

Firstly, Empress Dowager Shulü's generalization on the relations between Han and non-Han is incorrect. There had been many cases of which *fan* asked for *heqin* in their relationships with Han states.⁵¹⁰ In addition, although his discourteous manner caused tensions between the

⁵⁰⁹ ZZTJ 284:9293; QDGZ 3:29; 13:139.

⁵¹⁰ Regarding the relationship between Han and Xiongnu, the Han court suggested a peace treaty after Gaozu withdrew from the Xiongnu cavalry (*Shi ji* 110:2984). However, the case between Tang and the

two states, Chudi had continuously pursued friendly relations with Liao since 944. In the first month of 944, a Jin envoy was sent to Liao to restore the former relationship, but Taizong turned down Chudi's request. In the seventh month of the same year, Zhang Hui was dispatched to Liao "to beg" for peace but was detained by Taizong.⁵¹¹ In spite of these rejections, in the sixth month of 945, Zhang Hui was again sent to the Liao court with a "tribute memorial" (*biao*). This time, Taizong not only required the two prime ministers, Sang Weihuan 桑維翰 (898-947) and Jing Yanguang 景延廣 (892-947), to visit the Liao court in person, but also demanded two circuits (*dao* 道) in exchange for accepting Chudi's apology.⁵¹² The Later Jin court refused Taizong's offer because Chudi apparently considered it unreasonable, eliminating any possibility for the recovery of the former friendly relationship. Considering the conversation dates to the sixth month of 945, Chudi's prior efforts were not fully reflected in the conversation.

Furthermore, Empress Dowager Shulü's reference to the conquest of the Middle Kingdom comes from the perspective of a nomadic empire which conquered sedentary people. She articulated that a ruler with non-Han background cannot rule over the Han people. Incidentally, the same rhetoric can be found in Sima Qian's (145–86 BCE) *Records of the Grand Historian*.

Then Emperor Gao sent an envoy in secret to the Principal Consort of Shanyu (*yanzhi* 闕氏) with generous presents, whereon she told Modun, "How come two rulers put each

Tibetan empire was different. During the reign of Tang Taizong (r. 626-649), the Tibetan ruler, Songtsen Gampo, first sent envoys with a tributary memorial (*biao*) to the Tang court. However, the Sino-Tibetan war started because Taizong refused to send a Tang princess to the Tibetan court (*JTS* 146:5221). In Tang's relationship with Paekche, the Paekche court first sent envoys to the Tang court in 621. In 624, the Baekje ruler provided tribute with a tributary memorial (*fengbiao chaogong* 奉表朝貢) (*JTS* 199:5329). It proves that it was not always Han initiating peace treaties with non-Han people.

⁵¹¹ *LS* 4:54.

⁵¹² *ZZTJ* 284:9294.

other in trouble? Now, even if you gain Han lands, in the end you cannot occupy it. And as the Han king also might have guardian deities like you, [I beg you to] consider it.”⁵¹³

高帝乃使使問厚遺閼氏，閼氏乃謂冒頓曰：「兩主不相困。今得漢地，而單于終非能居之也。且漢王亦有神，單于察之。」

When Xiongnu invaded Han, Gaozu (r. 202-195 BC, Emperor Gao) of Han was surrounded by four hundred thousand Xiongnu cavalry in the Baideng Mountain 白登山. Understanding the urgency of the situation, Gaozu secretly bribed Principal Consort of Shanyu (*yanzhi*) to stop the invasion of Han. The Xiongnu ruler, Modun Shanyu, accepted his wife's advice and withdrew his military. Later Gaozu sent Liu Jing 劉敬 to make friendly relations with Xiongnu. *Yanzhi*'s advice consists of two portions. First, she persuaded Shanyu of Xiongnu based on the assumption that he would be not able to occupy the Han lands, and second, she told him that the Han ruler is possibly under the protection of Han deities. Of the two reasons, the former is similar to Empress Dowager Shulü's advice to Liao Taizong.

It is difficult to judge if the conversation recorded in *LS* reflects a real conversation which took place between Taizong and the empress dowager. Certainly, Chudi's arrogant attitude could have motivated Taizong to conquer Later Jin. However, several other aspects of the political situation of the time should also be considered. First, Chudi's efforts to return to the previous friendly relationship is not reflected in Taizong's view that "the Shi family reneged favor." Second, Empress Dowager Shulü's reasoning about precedents is incorrect. And third, her narrative was similar to that of the Xiongnu *yanzhi*. There is a possibility that the conversation was fabricated or manipulated by later historians to some degree to emphasize that the Middle Kingdom is unconquerable.

⁵¹³ *Shi ji* 110:2894. Translated by Burton with some modifications. See Burton, trans, *Records of the Grand Historian, Han dynasty* (New York: Renditions-Columbia University Press, 1993) 166.

Taizong's Rise to Emperor of the "Middle Kingdom"

In spite of Chudi's efforts to ameliorate relations, Later Jin was eventually conquered by Taizong in 946. The journey was not easy. It was the first time that North China was conquered by a nomadic ruler. Of course, there were some kingdoms and dynasties, in which rulers had non-Han backgrounds. For instance, during the Five Barbarians and Sixteen Kingdoms, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties periods, many of the rulers of the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties had non-Han backgrounds. However, those rulers had been living in the northern part of Chinese territory for centuries by the time they established their own dynasties/kingdoms. Taizong's case differed from these rulers. Taizong was the ruler of a nomadic empire.

Despite Taizong's unique achievement, Song historians give little attention to his conquest, treating this period as an interregnum. Although Taizong's true intentions for the "Middle Kingdom" are not clearly revealed in records, the modest coverage still gives us enough meaningful insight to uncover his intentions. Specifically, his actions reveal two significant strategies he employed during his conquest: (1) the manipulation of Han-Chinese generals, and (2) a policy of tolerance. By looking at these strategies, I attempt to decipher Taizong's true intentions for the "Middle Kingdom." Was his true intent to rule the "Middle Kingdom," or did he actually have no intent to rule?

The key strategy Taizong utilized to overtake Later Jin was the manipulation of Han generals by promising each of them the throne after the completion of his conquest. Taizong must have realized that this strategy would be successful due to the precedent he set before in Later Tang. When Shi Jintang asked for help from the Liao court to overthrow the Later Tang

court, Taizong helped him in exchange for one circuit and several prefectures. Even before Later Tang was defeated, Taizong had already installed Shi Jingtang as emperor.⁵¹⁴

It is only natural that the Han generals must have trusted that Taizong would become *faiseur de rois* for them based on this precedent. The first general was Zhao Yanshou 趙延壽 (d. 948), son-in-law of Mingzong of Tang, who had already changed his loyalty after the collapse of Later Tang. Zhao Yanshou, proving himself to be a loyal servant in the Liao Court, was installed by Taizong as Prince of Yan 燕王, one of the conquered prefectures. After Taizong decided to attack Later Jin, he promised to make Zhao Yanshou emperor of the Middle Kingdom if the conquest was successful.⁵¹⁵ But Zhao Yanshou was not the only person to whom Taizong promised the throne. For example, Du Chongwei 杜重威 (d. 948), whose wife was Shi Jingtang's sister, decided to surrender to the Liao court after Taizong convinced him that Zhao Yanshou was not of emperor material, offering the position of emperor in return for fealty.⁵¹⁶ Taizong bestowed a “red robe” 赭袍 to Zhao Yanshou instructing him to mollify the devastated Jin soldiers and declared to the Jin people that Zhao Yanshou was their ruler. Yet, on the same day, Taizong gave Du Chongwei a red robe, pitting them against one another.⁵¹⁷

The commentator of *ZZTJ*, Hu Sanxing, wrote that although Taizong taunted Zhao Yanshou and Du Chongwei, the Jin soldiers exhibited foolishness as well. Hu Sanxing specifies

⁵¹⁴ *ZZTJ* 280:9154. Although Taizong had to choose between Shi Jingtang and Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, Taizong fulfilled his engagement with Shi Jingtang (*ZZTJ* 280:9156). On Zhao Dejun and his influence at the time, see Naomi Standen, “Who Wants to be Emperor? Zhao Dejun, Youzhou, and the Liao” in *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, edited by Peter Lorge (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), 15-46.

⁵¹⁵ *JWDS* 98:1311; *ZZTJ* 283:9256. According to *ZZTJ*, Taizong offered the emperorship of the Middle Kingdom to Zhao Yanshou directly. He said, “If I acquire this, I will make you emperor.” 若得之，當立汝為帝。 He also told Jin people that “This (Zhao Yanshou) is your ruler.”

「此汝主也。」

⁵¹⁶ *ZZTJ* 285:9318.

⁵¹⁷ *ZZTJ* 285:9319.

that Taizong was very tactful by presenting Zhao Yanshou as the ruler in front of the Jin soldiers. The Jin soldiers and people would purportedly be less compelled to complain about their new ruler considering both emperor candidates, and therefore their future ruler, would inevitably be Han.⁵¹⁸ Regardless, this strategy was quite effective in defeating Later Jin. More importantly, Taizong was able to quickly defeat Later Jin with generally little bloodshed and casualties. Taizong used Du Chongwei's submission as a catalyst to swiftly obtain the surrenders of the Jin generals and bring the conquest to an end. After Later Jin's defeat, Taizong bluntly told Zhao Yanshou that naturally the conquest was for his own benefit. At this point, Zhao Yanshou could only ask to be installed as Heir Apparent, which Taizong again flatly refused because Zhao Yanshou was not his own son. Through this whole process, Zhao Yanshou only received an elevation of office.⁵¹⁹

After the defeat of the Jin military, Taizong employed a strategy of tolerance to subjugate North China. In the twelfth month in 946, Chudi, finally recognizing the destruction of his regime, hurriedly wrote a draft of "submission memorial" (*biao*), calling himself a grandson and servant of Taizong.⁵²⁰ Taizong comforted Chudi by guaranteeing him his life. The process of taking over the Jin's sovereignty went quite smoothly with most of the Jin officials greeting Taizong's procession without any provocations.

Taizong's policy of tolerance not only afforded leniency to Chudi, but also prevented the punishment of Jin generals and officials. For instance, even though Taizong suffered militarily from Fu Yanqing 符彥卿, a Jin general, in Yangcheng 陽城 the previous year, Taizong released him after his submission.⁵²¹ His tolerance policy regarding subjugated officials can be clearly

⁵¹⁸ ZZTJ 285:9319.

⁵¹⁹ ZZTJ 286:9339.

⁵²⁰ ZZTJ 285:9321.

⁵²¹ ZZTJ 285:9324.

seen in *LS*. When Jin officials asked to be punished, Taizong said, “their ruler reneged the debt, how could I punish the servants?” 其主負恩，其臣何罪。⁵²² The benevolence of Taizong’s tolerance policy found few enemies amongst even generals like the Shatuo Turkic An Shuqian 安叔千 who welcomed Taizong with *hu* language (*huyu*).⁵²³ Taizong also retained several hard-line officials who opposed the Liao court instead of punishing them. His policy of benevolence was not only limited to the mercy of Later Jin officials, but also allowed the Jin officials to maintain their customs in court, never enforcing Khitan cultural customs. Furthermore, Taizong did not forget to appease the common people. Emphasizing that he was only guided to the city by the Han military, Taizong assured the Jin people that he would not hurt them.

As a result, it seems that no one and nothing could obstruct Taizong’s installation as the emperor of the Middle Kingdom. His installation ceremony is only seen in *ZZTJ* and *QDGZ* which reused the *ZZTJ* version.

The Khitan ruler called all the Jin officials at the court and asked, “My state is vast and all directions are stretched tens of thousands of *li*. There are twenty-seven chieftains. [As I see] now the custom of the Middle Kingdom is different from my state, I would like to choose one person as a ruler. How do you think [about it]?” Everyone said, “There are no two suns in the sky. The hearts of *yi* and *xia* want to select and install [you] as emperor.” [They exchanged] this kind of [conversation] twice. Then, the Khitan ruler said, “You all want me to be the ruler. [If] we do this now, what shall be conducted first?” [The officials] answered, “The king who acquires all-under-heaven should grant pardons first.” In the second month, on the *dingsi*, the first day, the Khitan ruler wore the “communicating with heaven crown” with a red silk robe and stepped in the Main Hall; setting up a court band, palace guards at the court. All the officials celebrated at the court; *hua* people wore ceremonial costume while *hu* people wore *hu* costume, standing in the middle of civil and military squads.⁵²⁴

契丹主召晉百官悉集於庭，問曰：「吾國廣大，方數萬里，有君長二十七人；今中國之俗異於吾國，吾欲擇一人君之，如何？」皆曰：「天無二日。夷、夏之心，皆願推戴皇帝。」如是者再。契丹主乃曰：「汝曹既欲君我，今茲所行，何事為

⁵²² *LS* 4:58.

⁵²³ *ZZTJ* 280:9146.

⁵²⁴ *ZZTJ* 286:9338; *QDGZ* 3:37.

先？」對曰：「王者初有天下，應大赦。」二月，丁巳朔，契丹主服通天冠、絳紗袍，登正殿，設樂懸、儀衛於庭。百官朝賀，華人皆法服，胡人仍胡服，立於文武班中間。

On the first day in the second month in 947, Taizong was finally installed as emperor by Jin officials with unanimous consent. Taizong adhered to the Han Chinese tradition of refusing the throne several times, which was clearly for show. Receiving a warm welcome from the Jin officials as well as fealty from military governors across the Jin territory, his enthronement was conducted without any opposition or disputes. Taizong's enthronement as emperor of the Middle Kingdom through the Chinese-style coronation is particularly striking. He donned the traditional attire of Chinese emperors, the "communicating with heaven crown" and red robe, demonstrating his will to rule the Middle Kingdom based on its own laws and tradition. In addition, both Khitan and Han officials attended the coronation in accordance with their own customs, illustrating Taizong's pursuit of the co-existence of two different worlds under one sovereignty.

The two strategies of manipulating the Han generals and enforcing a policy of tolerance proved to be the keys to success for Taizong's conquest and complete subjugation of the Middle Kingdom. With these two strategies, Taizong went through extraordinary efforts to minimize bloodshed, avoid rebellion and opposition, and appease the Later Jin people and officials. This allowed for a peaceful transition of power and laid the foundation for him and his predecessors to rule for generations to come. Additionally, Taizong's intent to rule over the Middle Kingdom can be seen by the inclusion of the Middle Kingdom into Liao. According to *LS*, Taizong changed the state name to "Great Liao" 大遼 and his reign name to "Great Convergence" (Datong 大同), while also renaming Zhenzhou 鎮州 as Central Capital 中京.⁵²⁵ By neither distinguishing the

⁵²⁵ *LS* 4:59.

newly acquired the Middle Kingdom from his Liao territory nor changing his state name, Taizong showed his intent to incorporate the Middle Kingdom into his newly named “Great Liao.”

His intent to consolidate the two realms was further revealed in his new personnel appointments. He officially appointed his clansmen into prominent positions: Yelü Liugui 耶律留珪 as Military Governor of Yicheng 義成 and Fan Yunian 潘聿撚 as Military Governor of Henghai 橫海.⁵²⁶ Military Governor of Yicheng was an especially significant post as it was previously occupied by prominent Jin generals such as Jing Yanguang and Li Shouzhen 李守貞 (d. 949).⁵²⁷ Taizong’s authorization of personnel appointments to Jin military posts should be understood as his will to control the Middle Kingdom. Taizong’s intent to rule the “Middle Kingdom” was clear, his conquest of North China was well-documented, and his acceptance by the Jin court was completed through legitimate procedure and was officially recorded. This period clearly saw a lord in the Central Plain and should not be called an interregnum.

Taizong’s Will for the “Middle Kingdom”

However, Taizong’s rule did not last long. In the third month in 947, he abruptly decided to go back to the Supreme Capital 上京 where the original Liao capital was located. Scholars usually regard Taizong’s relinquishment of his rule over the “Middle Kingdom” as primarily his

⁵²⁶ Yelü Liugui is Taizong’s nephew. He is a brother of Yelü Wuyu 耶律兀欲 whose father is Yelü Bei. Fan Yunian is the brother-in-law of Yelü Wuyu (ZZTJ 286:9333).

⁵²⁷ Jin Yanguang became Military Governor of Yicheng in 939 (JWDS 78:1025). Shi Jingtang’s brother-in-law, Shi Kuanghan 史匡翰, also received the post in 940 (JWDS 79:1044). Li Shouzhen was Military Governor of Yicheng at least by 942 (JWDS 81:1069).

recognition of the mistakes he made during his administration.⁵²⁸ In *ZZTJ*, after hearing that Heyang 河陽, the north bank of Yellow River, was in turmoil on his way back to the Liao court, Taizong blamed himself with the following three faults: taking money from the local governments, allowing the Khitan military to plunder common people,⁵²⁹ and not sending Military Governors back to their assigned circuits sooner.⁵³⁰ Sima Guang attributed the turmoil to Taizong's mistakes by directly quoting Taizong. Additionally, in the Monograph of the Khitans in *XWDS*, Taizong is described as being afraid of Liu Zhiyuan's accession as well as generals' defections.⁵³¹

I argue that this evaluation of Taizong's relinquishment of power should be reconsidered. Diverging from these Song records, the Annal of Taizong in *LS* described the Middle Kingdom as a part of "Great Liao" as if this transition was only natural.⁵³² More importantly, although *LS* did mention Taizong's three mistakes, it did not associate his mistakes to his return to the Supreme Capital. In *LS*, the context behind Taizong's mistakes is more likely his regret or confession about his actions during "this trip" (*cixing* 此行) in North China. Rather, *LS*'s description is more focused on Taizong's reply to his brother's inquiry on military affairs. In the letter, Taizong explained not only the conditions, but also his aspiration to conquer the Hedong

⁵²⁸ Zhang Zhengming 張正明, *Qidan shilüe* 契丹史略 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 35-36; Chen Shu 陳述, *Qidan zhengzhi shigao* 契丹政治史稿 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986), 116-118.

⁵²⁹ According to *ZZTJ*, Taizong allowed the Liao military to loot the Jin people. Considering that looting was a major custom of nomads after conquering a region, it is likely that Taizong followed the tradition to compensate the Liao soldiers (*ZZTJ* 286:9354).

⁵³⁰ *ZZTJ* 286:9354.

⁵³¹ *XWDS* 72:898.

⁵³² In *LS*, in the first month of January, Taizong was welcomed by the Jin officials with a palanquin. Without recording the specific coronation, *LS* describes it as if Taizong was the only arbiter who could control the Jin court. *LS* records his reformation in the second month, specifying the change of his reign name to "Great Convergence" while he was in Bianzhou. See *LS* 4:59. It implies that the compilers of *LS* recognized Taizong as the sole emperor of the Sino-Inner Asian world.

region and stabilize Bianzhou.⁵³³ This clearly implies that Taizong was still interested in ruling North China, in stark contrast to Song sources.

Moreover, it seems that Taizong's true reasons for returning to the Supreme Capital was to avoid the sweltering heat and to meet Empress Dowager Shulü.⁵³⁴ The records in *ZZTJ* show that he could not bear the heat on the eighth day of the third month and was stricken with serious illness on his way back.⁵³⁵ The Monograph of the Khitans in *JWDS* describes that Taizong left for the "Supreme State" (*shangguo* 上國) on the seventeenth day in the same month. On the twenty-first day in the third month, Taizong told Gao Xun 高勳 that he was relieved to return to the Supreme Capital⁵³⁶ and through this conversation, Gao Xun predicted the death of Taizong.⁵³⁷ Taizong's death on the twenty-first day in the fourth month seemed to have been predicted to some degree, because of the possibility that he was already sick. Bolstering this perspective, according to the Biography of Hou Zhang 侯章 in *History of Song* (*Song shi*), Taizong's return to the Liao court was due to his illness. In the biography, it was Hou Zhang who asked Taizong to escape the heat.⁵³⁸

The other reason he wanted to return to the Supreme Capital was to meet his mother Empress Dowager Shulü. There is a possibility that Taizong's sudden return was requested by his mother. Empress Dowager Shulü sent envoys to Taizong in the second and the third months

⁵³³ *LS* 4:60.

⁵³⁴ *ZZTJ* 286:9348.

⁵³⁵ It was not the first time that a ruler who had a nomadic background moved to the northern territory. In 494, Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝 of Northern Wei (r. 471-499) moved his capital from Pingcheng 平城 to Luoyang to rule the Han people effectively. In 496, his son and Crown Prince, Yuan Xun 元恂 (483-497), went back to Pingcheng to avoid the heat.

⁵³⁶ *ZZTJ* 286:9350. *ZZTJ* dates the conversation to the twenty-first day while *JWDS* did not record the exact date.

⁵³⁷ *JWDS* 137:1836. After Taizong mentioned that he would not mind dying if he can go back to the "Supreme State," Gao Xun thought that Taizong would die soon.

⁵³⁸ See *Song shi* 252:8859.

of 947. Late in the second month, she sent envoys to celebrate Taizong's conquest of the Jin court with fruits, beverages, and delicacies produced in Liao. Taizong stood drinking the liquor as a token of respect to his mother.⁵³⁹ In the next month, Taizong received a letter from Empress Dowager Shulü along with Abaoji's "Bright Hall" letter (*mingdian shu* 明殿書). According to *XWDS*, when there were events to celebrate or mourn, a letter was issued under the name of the previous ruler, usually with the purpose of commanding something of the "son emperor" (*er huangdi* 兒皇帝).⁵⁴⁰ The letter might have been issued solely to celebrate his successful conquest of Jin. However, coincidentally, Taizong's return was announced only six days after the receipt of the letter from the empress dowager. On the same day, Taizong installed Xiao Han 蕭翰 (d. 949), a nephew of Empress Dowager Shulü, as Military Governor of Xuanwu Circuit 宣武軍, to administer the region of Bianzhou.

Considering Taizong's father died two decades prior and the court of the Supreme Capital was under the control of Empress Dowager Shulü, both of the letters he received must have conveyed a strong message from his mother. Although it is not known what Abaoji's or Empress Dowager Shulü's letter exactly commanded of Taizong, Taizong's decision could have been directly influenced by the combined impact of both his mother's and deceased father's letters. From Taizong's perspective, he was obliged to heed Empress Dowager Shulü's message because her support was necessary to maintain his throne. When he was busy conquering the Middle Kingdom, his brother, Yelü Lihu 耶律李胡 (911-960), was in the Supreme Capital as heir apparent. It is well-known that Empress Dowager Shulü favored Yelü Lihu even though

⁵³⁹ *ZZTJ* 286:9345-9346.

⁵⁴⁰ *XWDS* 72:898.

Abaoji considered him insignificant.⁵⁴¹ Yelü Lihu became heir apparent after his contribution towards defeating Huanzhou 寰州. His confirmation as heir apparent would have been impossible without the help of the empress dowager who had always wanted her youngest son to become the ruler of the Khitan empire.⁵⁴² Considering that Yelü Bei was excluded from the succession process during his absence in the Liao court to control the newly conquered Parhae (Ch. Bohai 渤海) region, Taizong could have been concerned about a similar situation arising.

After the death of Taizong, the Liao court was caught in the turbulence of a succession crisis. In the fourth month of 947, Taizong's nephew and Yelü Bei's son, Yelü Wuyu 耶律兀欲 (r. 947-951), was first selected as the next ruler by Khitan generals and the members of the imperial family.⁵⁴³ Since Yelü Wuyu's ascension lacked Empress Dowager Shulü's consent, Yelü Wuyu stood against both Yelü Lihu, the heir apparent and his uncle, and his grandmother, the empress dowager. If Yelü Wuyu continued to stay in North China, his succession could have been at risk of not being legitimized in the Supreme Capital. Most likely aware of this situation, Xiao Han, who was supposed to be in charge of Bianliang, falsely revised (*jiao* 矯) the emperor's edict and charged Li Congyi 李從益 (931-947), the youngest son of Mingzong of Later Tang, with the supervision of the "Southern Dynasty" (*nanchao*).⁵⁴⁴ Designating North China as "Southern Dynasty" implies that the Khitans considered their original regime in Inner Asia as "Northern Dynasty." It is uncertain if Yelü Wuyu's intention was to install Li Congyi as

⁵⁴¹ *LS* 72:1213. Yelü Lihu had been Heir Apparent since 930.

⁵⁴² *LS* 71:1200.

⁵⁴³ According to *ZZTJ*, following Taizong's death, Zhao Yanshou announced that he would become "the one who has replaced the Military and State duty of the Southern Dynasty" (*quanzhi nanchao junguo shi* 權知南朝軍國事) according to Taizong's will. However, Yelü Wuyu was already selected as the next ruler by the Khitan generals and imperial family members (*ZZTJ* 286:9356). Later, he officially became emperor of Liao in the fifth month (*ZZTJ* 287:9358; *JWDS* 100:1331; *QDGZ* 3:40). *LS* dates his official enthronement in the ninth month of 947. See *LS* 5:64.

⁵⁴⁴ *ZZTJ* 287:9362.

emperor of “Southern Dynasty,” because records only show Xiao Han fabricating the edict. However, it seems highly probable that Xiao Han followed Yelü Wuyu due to two reasons. First, unless Xiao Han supported Yelü Wuyu after Taizong’s death, Xiao Han would have presumably met the same fate as those officials who were buried after Abaoji’s death.⁵⁴⁵ Second, Xiao Han had been harboring hostility towards Empress Dowager Shulü since his innocent mother was killed due to the empress dowager.⁵⁴⁶ Eventually, although Yelü Wuyu’s return allowed him to consolidate power in the Liao court, his absence in North China allowed for Liu Zhiyuan to seize the Middle Kingdom from Khitan rule.

The obscurity surrounding Taizong’s death and the chaos of the subsequent succession process only add to the confusion of his last will. Yet after a careful study of all the primary sources, we can deduce that the reason for Taizong’s departure from North China was not because he was ashamed of his actions, but because of heat and domestic political woes. His will to continue ruling over the “Middle Kingdom” is crucial because it quells “Sinocentric” arguments that his stay in North China should be considered as nothing more than an inconvenient gap in the Five Dynasties’ history because he never truly intended to rule North China. Starting from his decision to wage war on Later Jin, Taizong’s motive, intent, and will had been clear: to conquer the “Middle Kingdom” and rule it for years to come. Although his rule was short-lived, his sincerity to rule over the Later Jin territory becomes apparent through the sources which validate his newly acquired role as ruler over the “Middle Kingdom.” Therefore, the reign of a legitimate nomadic ruler in North China or the “Middle Kingdom”

⁵⁴⁵ At the time, most of the Khitan chieftains and generals followed Yelü Wuyu because Empress Dowager killed Abaoji’s followers in the past. They were afraid of being killed when the empress dowager and Yelü Lihu seized power (*ZZTJ* 287:9364).

⁵⁴⁶ *LS* 103:1506.

should be uncontested, with North China even being incorporated into the much broader nomadic state of “Great Liao” for a few months.

Southern Tang’s Lost Chance of Unification?

Long Gun’s *Unofficial History of Jiangnan (JNYS)* includes a vivid conversation between a Liao envoy and Li Jing, the second emperor of Southern Tang, regarding Southern Tang’s rule over the Middle Kingdom.

At the moment, the Khitan ruler, Yelü Deguang (Taizong), defeated Bianliang and sent two envoys to report (*gao*) it. [Li Jing] said, ... “what does your ruler want me to do?” [The envoy] responded, “The young ruler of Jin violated the order and broke his promise, so he was already sent to *fan* (Khitan). The Liao ruler wants to [go together] with you, continuing your previous ruler’s friendly relationship, [and he wants] to make you the ruler of the Central Plain. The succeeding ruler (Li Jing) said, “I have preserved the soil and grain of Jiangnan and succeeded the blocked and remote road of Liang and Song regions. If Khitan [ruler] did not forget the former friendly relationship and shows mercy by letting people come and go, I am indebted enough. [I] do not deserve to disgrace the rest of his command.” After hearing this, finally the *fan* (Khitan) envoy went back.⁵⁴⁷

是時遼主耶律德光陷汴梁，遣二使來告。曰：…「卿主所以命孤者將奚為」對曰：「晉少主逆命背約，既遣入蕃。遼主欲與君，繼先君之好，將冊君為中原之主矣。」嗣主曰：「孤守江南社稷，系嗣與梁宋阻修。若契丹不忘先好，惠錫行人，孤受賜多矣。其他不敢拜命之辱。」蕃使聞之遂行。

Unlike the official histories which did not include either Taizong’s intentions or Li Jing’s designs for North China, *JNYS* alongside both Lu You and Ma Ling’s *NTSs* reveal a different reality.

This conversation presented in *JNYS* sheds light on the political and diplomatic reality surrounding the Southern Tang dynasty. First, Liao wanted to continue amicable relations with

⁵⁴⁷ *JNYS* 2:97.

Southern Tang. Second, unification was one of the most important issues at the time. Third, Taizong possibly had a plan to use Li Jing as a puppet to rule the “Central Plain” and to replace the Shi family. In the conversation, the envoy tries to persuade Li Jing to become the ruler of the “Central Plain,” presumably meaning North China. Fourth, the Khitan ruler was well aware of the friendly relations which Liao and Southern Tang had maintained by saying he wanted “to continue the previous ruler’s friendly relationship” 繼先君之好. This could also be understood as Taizong recognizing the Southern Tang court as the successor of the Later Tang court, whom they had brotherly relations with.

However, Li Jing makes excuses to refuse the offer. All he asked for was an open route between Southern Tang and Liao. Why did Li Jing refuse Taizong’s offer? Was Li Jing not interested in the restoration of the Central Plain? If not, since when was Southern Tang involved in the struggle over the Middle Kingdom?⁵⁴⁸

Li Bian’s Period (937-943): From Qi to Tang

After the fall of Later Tang, Xu Zhigao (r. 937-943) had the desire to obtain the “Middle Kingdom” even before his installation as the ruler of Qi 齊 in the eighth month of 937. The path to the reclamation of the “Middle Kingdom” was directly dependent on the legitimacy of his court. After his accession to ruler of Qi, Xu Zhigao finally changed his state name to Tang in the tenth month of 937 after the fall of Later Tang. Changing the dynastic name allowed him to

⁵⁴⁸ Kurz recently wrote an article on the unification plans of Southern Tang. In this article, he explores the unification plan based on the survey of the Chinese scholarship. (Kurz, “On the Unification Plans of the Southern Tang Dynasty,” *Journal of Asian History* 50 (2016): 23-45.) Here, I especially focus on the restoration intent of Southern Tang with focus on its relationship with Liao.

create legitimacy for his new Tang court.⁵⁴⁹ After he became the ruler of Southern Tang, he focused on building his legitimacy as the successor of Tang. He not only changed his name to Li Bian, but also established ancestral shrines for up to five previous generations before his father. This fake genealogy went back to Li Xian 李峴 whose great-grandfather is Li Ke 李恪 (?-653), Prince of Wu 吳王. Since Li Ke, a son of Taizong of Tang, was falsely accused of treason, Li Bian instead chose Li Xian as his direct ancestor.⁵⁵⁰ Through this fictive genealogy, Li Bian created a continuity of the Tang dynasty from Tang to Later Tang to Southern Tang.

His next step was to create friendly relations with Liao. Retaining a good relationship with Liao was not only symbolic as the Later Tang court had brotherly relations with the Khitans, but also practical in order to receive military support in the future. According to *ZZTJ*, even before becoming ruler of Qi, Li Bian, then still known as Xu Zhigao, followed the advice of his advisor Song Qiqiu 宋齊丘 (887–959) and sent envoys with beautiful ladies and valuable gifts to the Khitan court across the sea. Liao Taizong sent envoys to respond to this visit.⁵⁵¹ After his accession to ruler of Qi and changing the dynastic name to Tang, Li Bian continuously sent envoys to the Liao court while refraining from doing so to the Later Jin court. In the eighth month of 937, Taizong received envoys from Li Bian, and in return, Taizong sent envoys to Southern Tang in the ninth month.⁵⁵² Delegations were also continuously sent in 938. According to Lu You's *NTS*, Taizong's younger brother also paid thirty thousand sheep and two hundred

⁵⁴⁹ Kurz, *China's Southern Tang Dynasty, 937-976*, 26.

⁵⁵⁰ *ZZTJ* 282:9218-9219. Since Li Ke, a son of Taizong of Tang, was falsely accused of treason, Li Bian chose Li Ke's great-grandson as his direct ancestor. There are several versions of fabricating Southern Tang's imperial genealogy. See Kurz, "On the Southern Tang Imperial Genealogy," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134, no. 4 (2014): 601-620.

⁵⁵¹ *ZZTJ* 281:9173; *JNYS* 1:464-72.

⁵⁵² *LS* 3:41. *LS* records that Li Bian of Southern Tang sent envoys and Taizong sent Zhuligu to Southern Tang. However, Xu Zhigao took Wu in the eighth month of 937 and changed the dynastic name from Wu to Tang in the tenth month. He changed his name to Li Bian in 939. For the sake of convenient reference, I followed *LS*'s version.

horses as tribute (*gong*) to Li Bian.⁵⁵³ In the sixth month of 938, the Southern Tang court sent envoys to the Liao court, and in return for the delegation, the Liao court sent envoys to Southern Tang in the eighth month of same year.⁵⁵⁴

While maintaining these friendly relations with Liao, the Southern Tang court tried to estrange Liao from Later Jin. According to *ZZTJ*, when the Liao delegation arrived in the eighth month of 938, Li Bian's advisor Song Qiqiu advised him to kill the Liao envoy in Jin territory while the envoy was returning to Liao. Hu Sanxing, the commutator of *ZZTJ*, noted that this was Southern Tang's strategy to make Taizong believe that the Jin people killed the envoy.⁵⁵⁵ According to *JNYS*, the Southern Tang court used this same strategy four times which eventually led to Taizong attacking the Jin frontier.⁵⁵⁶ The Later Jin must have realized Southern Tang's strategy to cause strife between Later Jin and Liao. So when Southern Tang sent Ouyang Yu 歐陽遇 as an envoy to the Later Jin court to request passage through Jin territory to reach Liao, they refused this request.⁵⁵⁷ However, this scheme would have been difficult to carry out during the reign of Shi Jingtang because the Jin court was a loyal vassal to the Liao court. In 941, the officials in the Southern Tang court advised Li Bian to recover the "old territory" (*jiu jiang* 舊疆). However, this time, Li Bian did not listen to the officials with the justification that he could not bear to see the commoners suffer from war. In this conversation, the officials urged an

⁵⁵³ *NTS* [L] 18:4-1.

⁵⁵⁴ *NTS* [L] 1:6-1.

⁵⁵⁵ *ZZTJ* 281:9189.

⁵⁵⁶ *JNYS* 4: 119.

⁵⁵⁷ *ZZTJ* 282:9221; *NTS* [L]18:5-1.

attack on Later Jin on the premise that Li Bian was the rightful ruler for the restoration (*zhongxing* 中興) of the Tang empire.⁵⁵⁸

Li Jing's Period (943-961)

As Li Bian's successor, Li Jing 李景 (r. 943-961) pursued a similar policy to his father during his reign. Li Jing rejected Taizong's offer to be installed as emperor of the "Central Plain," because he wanted to avoid a continuation of the previous relations between Later Jin and Liao, one of a vassal to a lord. Although *JNYS* has had no record of a "covenant," according to Lu You's *NTS* and *SGCQ*, Taizong asked for a (*qing*) "covenant" (*huimeng* 會盟) with Li Jing at the frontier.⁵⁵⁹ Even though Taizong and Li Jing's father, Li Bian, had a friendly relationship, it was not a lord-vassal relationship. During Li Bian's reign, Taizong engaged with Li Bian based on "the décorum for older brother" (*xiongli* 兄禮).⁵⁶⁰ Considering Taizong's relationship with the Shi family of Later Jin, the "covenant" which Taizong suggested must have been along the lines of establishing a hierarchical relationship in return for his gifting of the emperorship for the Middle Kingdom to Li Jing.

However, although Li Jing refused Taizong's offer, he never abandoned his interest for North China. Later in the same month, he sent envoys to Taizong to ask if they could restore the mausoleums of the Tang dynasty.⁵⁶¹ In the fourth month of 947 when Taizong died on the way

⁵⁵⁸ *ZZTJ* 282:9221; *JNYS* 1:464-72. *ZZTJ*'s version describes that after Li Bian rejected an attack on Later Jin, the Southern Han ruler encouraged him to conquer Chu. However, *JNYS* only has the former suggestion while Ma Ling's *NTS* only shows the latter suggestion.

⁵⁵⁹ *NTS* [L] 2:4-2; *SGCQ* 16:6-2.

⁵⁶⁰ *NTS* [L] 1:7-1; *SGCQ* 15:10-1.

⁵⁶¹ *ZZTJ* 286: 9338. However, this time Taizong rejected the request and soon installed himself as emperor.

back to the Liao court, Li Jing issued an edict saying, “I miss the Central Plain, the “old territory” (*gudi* 故地) where our court belongs to.”⁵⁶² Li Jing summoned several generals to discuss the restoration of the old territory, but it ended in failure due to Liu Zhiyuan having already occupied the region of Bianliang. Even after Liu Zhiyuan founded Later Han, Li Jing did not give up on his policy on restoration. In the fourth month of 948, the Southern Tang envoys Li Lang 李朗 and Wang Zuo 王祚 went to the Liao court to celebrate the accession of the new emperor, Shizong’s (r.947-951), and to discuss another matter regarding an attack on Later Han.⁵⁶³ The record of 955 in *ZZTJ* proves Li Jing’s connection not only with Liao but also with Northern Han. Ever since the foundation of Later Zhou by Guo Wei (r. 951-954), Li Jing had sent envoys to Liao and Northern Han “to have a plan for the Middle Kingdom together” 約共圖中國.⁵⁶⁴

In addition to his frequent contact with Liao, Li Jing also supported rebellions in North China to promote conflicts within the state. When Li Shouzhen rose in rebellion against the Later Han court, Southern Tang dispatched troops to support him.⁵⁶⁵ In 952 during the Murong Yanchao’s 慕容彥超 rebellion against the Later Zhou court, Li Jing aided him with five

⁵⁶² *ZZTJ* 287:9368; *NTS* [L] 2:5-1. According to *NTS*, Li Jing disclosed his intention to restore the Central Plain after he heard that Taizong “abandoned the Central Plain” 棄中原. Here, again, Taizong’s departure to Liao was considered “abandonment.”

⁵⁶³ *LS* 5:64.

⁵⁶⁴ *ZZTJ* 292:9532.

⁵⁶⁵ It was in the ninth month of 948 when Li Shouzhen requested military aid from Southern Tang, Shu, and Liao (288:9400). Li Jing sent troops to aid Li Shouzhen but came to the conclusion that it was hopeless to seize Hedong 河東. In the end, Li Jing withdrew from the campaign and sent a letter to the Later Han court to seek forgiveness, but the Later Han court did not respond to it (*ZZTJ* 288:9404).

thousand soldiers.⁵⁶⁶ Li Jing even sent a secret letter to Li Chongjin 李重進, who was a nephew of Taizu of Zhou, to estrange him from the Later Zhou court.⁵⁶⁷

Although the Southern Tang court continuously tried to restore the previous Tang territory, their wishes were never realized. Even Southern Tang's plan to receive military aid from Liao to restore North China failed. After Later Zhou overtook Later Han, the Liao had their hands full supporting Northern Han. Since 951, Northern Han had received constant military aid after the Later Zhou court came to power. The Liao most likely could not afford to send military support to Southern Tang. In the sixth month 951, Southern Tang asked for military help from Liao,⁵⁶⁸ yet no instances of military support can be seen in the sources even though there are records of Liao militarily supporting Northern Han. In 956, when Southern Tang was put on the defensive, Li Jing sent envoys to the Liao court to ask for military aid, however there is no record showing that this message reached Liao.⁵⁶⁹ The same year, Li Jing sent a delegation with valuable jewelry to the Liao court to request military support. However, Liao Muzong not only "was not able to" (*buneng* 不能) provide military support, but also did not blame the envoy who protested this lack of aid.⁵⁷⁰ *LS* also records that due to the consecutive reign of peace, the military became weaker. Due to the lack of military strength, Muzong "was not able to" (*buneng*) respond to requests for military aid from both the Southern Tang and Northern Han

⁵⁶⁶ Like Li Shouzheng's rebellion, it failed. The Tang army was defeated by Zhang Lingbin 張令彬, a Later Zhou general (*ZZTJ* 290:9473).

⁵⁶⁷ *ZZTJ* 293:9560. After reading the secret letter, Li Chongjin reported it to Shizong. Coincidentally, the Southern Tang envoys Sun Sheng 孫晟 and Zhong Mo 鍾謨 were in Bianliang at the time in order to persuade Shizong not to invade Southern Tang. Because the secret letter was revealed, Sun Sheng was killed.

⁵⁶⁸ *LS* 5:66.

⁵⁶⁹ The envoys carried a letter which was sealed with beeswax but they were caught by the Military Officer of Jing'an 靜安軍使, He Jijun 繼筠 (獲) (*ZZTJ* 292:9541). *XWDS* and Ma Ling's *NTS* have a record of this incident in the eleventh month of 955 (*XDWS* 62:774; *NTS* [M] 3:21).

⁵⁷⁰ *ZZTJ* 293:9562. According to *SGCQ*, Chen Chuyao was sent to the Liao court two times in 956. Both times, he begged for (*qi*) military aid from Muzong (*SGCQ* 16:18-1; 16:20-1).

courts.⁵⁷¹ Especially after Northern Han was defeated in Gaoping 高平, the Liao military did not seem to be able to fully recover from this defeat. Moreover, it was not easy to communicate between these two states. While Southern Tang envoys primarily used sea routes to reach Liao, envoys were sometime unable to reach Liao through land routes because Later Zhou was situated geographically between these states.

The Diplomatic Language: Relations between Southern Tang and Liao

Although Southern Tang was dependent on Liao for military aid in their aims to restore North China, the relationship between Southern Tang and Liao seemed to be quite different from that of Later Jin and Liao. The diplomatic language used between the two states can be seen in Lu You's *NTS*, Ma Ling's *NTS*, *ZZTJ*, *SGCQ*, and *LS*. Besides the later years of Li Jing's reign, Southern Tang maintained an equal relationship with Liao. In the earlier years of Li Bian's reign, not only did Taizong send envoys, but also his brother, the king of Dongdan sent envoys with tribute (*gong*) to Li Bian.⁵⁷² Records in Lu You's *NTS* also show the receipt of envoys from both Taizong and the king of Dongdan. In early 938, Li Bian received horses and sheep as tribute (*gong*), while in the sixth month of same year, envoys arrived with letters from Taizong and the king of Dongdan. Moreover, Taizong followed "the *décorum* for older brother" in his interactions with Li Bian. This is significant because the Later Jin emperor, Shi Jingtang, was considered a vassal and son while Li Bian was treated as an older brother.

⁵⁷¹ *QDGZ* 13:141.

⁵⁷² *NTS* [L] 18:4-1; *SGCQ* 15:8-1. Since Yelü Bei defected to the Later Tang court, no one was appointed as the king of Dongdan. Most likely, Yelü Lihu was appointed as Heir Apparent in 930.

In most cases, the diplomatic language clearly varies.⁵⁷³ Compared to Lu You's *NTS*, *JNYS* and Ma Ling's *NTS* have fewer records of the relationship between the two states. Importantly, Lu You's *NTS* and *LS* reflect mostly *emic* perspectives. In Lu You's *NTS*, when the Liao envoys arrived at the Southern Tang court, "to pay tribute (*gong*)" or "to offer up" (*xian*) were frequently used in addition to "to visit" (*pin*). For instance, when Liao envoys came to the Southern Tang court in 940, Lu You's *NTS* records that the Liao envoys offered up (*feng*) fur clothes made of fox axillary leather.⁵⁷⁴ In *LS*, "to provide tribute" (*gong*) or "to offer up" (*feng*) were used when the Southern Tang envoys arrived in the Liao court. For example, when the Southern Tang envoys came to the Liao court in 941, *LS* records that they provided tribute (*gong*).⁵⁷⁵ The language in *ZZTJ* is relatively neutral compared to those in *LS* and both *NTS*s. *ZZTJ* tends to refrain from using language which highlight hierarchical status such as *gong* or *xian*. *SGCQ* reuses records mostly from Lu You's *NTS*, but also from *ZZTJ*. For instance, in 956 when Later Zhou attacked Southern Tang, Li Jing sent an agent to ask for help, but the agent was captured by Zhou. In this instance, while Lu You's *NTS* and *SGCQ* used "to seek aid" (*qiuyuan* 求援), Ma Ling's *NTS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ* used "to plea" (*qiujiu*). Lu You's *NTS* tends to exclude negative events. According to *SGCQ*, right after the agent was captured, Li Jing sent an official envoy, Chen Chuyao 陳處堯, to Liao to beg (*qi*) for military aid. Again, at the end of 957, Chen Chuyao was dispatched to the Liao court to beg (*qi*) for military aid. Both *SGCQ* and *ZZTJ* have records of Chen Chuyao's visits to the Liao court while Lu You's *NTS* has no records. Even though *QDGZ* included just a few records of Southern Tang envoys, the compiler seems to have had a Khitan-biased perspective. In the Biography of Empress Xiao of Muzong, Southern Tang

⁵⁷³ See Chapter 5 Appendix.

⁵⁷⁴ *NTS* [L] 1:8-2.

⁵⁷⁵ *LS* 4:49.

and Northern Han were considered “vassal[s]” (*fanzhen* 藩鎮) and equivalent to “the kinds of Li Shouzheng” 李守貞之類.⁵⁷⁶

Relations between Liao and Southern Tang was decisively confirmed by a letter sent by the Khitan emperor, Muzong, after the death of Shizong of Liao. Muzong sent a letter to Li Jing to retain friendly relations with the Southern Tang court. In this letter, Muzong designated himself as the Heavenly Obedience Emperor of Great Khitan Emperor (*da Qidan tianshun huangdi* 大契丹天順皇帝, while addressing Li Jing as the Emperor of Great Tang (*da Tang huangdi* 大唐皇帝).⁵⁷⁷ The letter was full of concern and respect for the Southern Tang court. Considering the document was not an “edict” (*chi*) but a “letter” (*shu*), the equal nature of the relationship was mutually acknowledged.

According to Lu You’s *NTS*, Ma Ling’s *NTS*, and *SGCQ*, Liao severed the friendly relationship with Southern Tang in 954. In the seventh month of 954, Muzong’s father-in-law was dispatched as an envoy to Southern Tang. During the banquet in Qingfengyi 清風驛, the envoy never returned from the bathroom as he was beheaded by a Later Zhou assassin employed by Jing Hanru 荆罕儒, a Military Training Commissioner 團練使 of Taizhou 泰州. According to *ZZTJ* and *QDGZ*, this incident happened in the 959, specifically recorded as the grand finale of the entire text of *ZZTJ*.⁵⁷⁸ However, considering that after 954, there were no cases of Liao sending delegations to Southern Tang with only records of the Southern Tang court sending

⁵⁷⁶ *QDGZ* 13:141.

⁵⁷⁷ *NTS* [L] 1:8-1.

⁵⁷⁸ *NTS* [L] 2:9-2; *NTS* [M] 3:19; *SGCQ* 16:14-2; *ZZTJ* 294:9606; *QDGZ* 5:53.

envoys to the Liao court to request military assistance, the date in Lu You's *NTS*, Ma Ling's *NTS*, and *SGCQ* makes more sense in this context.⁵⁷⁹

In Pursuit of Legitimation: Northern Han

After Liu Zhiyuan died, the command of Later Han was transferred to the young emperor, Liu Chengyou. The young ruler's superfluous doubts and suspicions of his father's loyal generals eventually led to the demise of the dynasty. Guo Wei, one of the meritorious officials from Liu Zhiyuan's court, became a target of dismissal after Guo Wei purged Li Shouzhen, a rebel against the Han court. Liu Chengyou tried to eliminate Guo Wei because of his growing influence but failed to do so. Eventually, Guo Wei killed the puppet emperor-to-be, Liu Yun 劉贇 (d. 951), and declared himself emperor of Later Zhou. On the day Liu Yun was killed, his father and Liu Zhiyuan's brother, Liu Chong, founded another Han court in Jinyang 晉陽, which came to be known as Northern Han.

Fight for Legitimation

The Northern Han court tried to establish its legitimacy as the true successor state of Later Han. In *XWDS*, Liu Chong's purpose of founding the state was clearly recorded.

Before this, Liu Min (Liu Chong's new name) often said to Zhang Yuanhui and cohort, "In preserving the legacy of Gaozu and redressing the injustice against Liu Yun, righteous principle precludes my submission to Guo Wei. I hope, along with you, to exert every effort in exacting revenge for family and state. As for declaring myself Emperor

⁵⁷⁹ There is a possibility that Sima Guang might have dated this incident in 959 because the Southern Tang court had sent envoys at least six times after 954.

over one corner of all-under-heaven (*tianxia*), what choice did I have? What sort of Son of Heaven do you see in me, what sort of governors do you see in yourselves?” Although assuming bogus titles of royalty, he continued to use the Qianyou reign-name [of Later Han] with no changes. Nor did Min erect his own ancestral temple. In conducting the rituals of each season, he limited himself to the rites appropriate for a clansman.⁵⁸⁰

初，旻常謂張元徽等曰：「吾以高祖之業，贐之冤，義不為郭公屈爾，期與公等勉力以復家國之讎。至於稱帝一方，豈獲已也，顧我是何天子，爾亦是何節度使？」故其僭號仍稱乾祐，不改元，不立宗廟，四時之祭，用家人禮。

In this record, Liu Chong had two purposes to establish Northern Han. First, he sought the revival of Later Han which was built by his brother, Liu Zhiyuan, and second, he craved revenge against Guo Wei who killed his son, Liu Yun. Hence, he did not change the reign name which was used by his brother and his own son.⁵⁸¹

Even though Liu Chong ambitiously installed himself as emperor, he did know his limitations as emperor of the newly founded state. As he said that he was only “an emperor over one corner of *tianxia*,” Liu Chong set lucid boundaries on what he could achieve. It was beyond his capacity to engage in warfare against Northern Zhou. Furthermore, the Northern Han court was suffering from a financial crisis, even having to cut the salaries of court officials. Facing many hardships, Northern Han’s strategy was simple—to use Liao’s military power to stand against Guo Wei’s Later Zhou court. However, by saying “what sort of Son of Heaven do you see in me, what sort of governors do you see in yourselves?” Liu Chong seemed to brace and prepare himself and his generals for the insecure destiny of his state.

Although the lord-vassal relationship was the precedent set between Liao and Later Jin, it must have been difficult for Liu Chong to decide whether to become a vassal of Liao or not.

⁵⁸⁰ I followed Davis’s translation with some changes. See Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 597. Similar record appears in *ZZTJ*. (*ZZTJ* 290:9454.)

⁵⁸¹ Liu Chong even received Shizu 世祖 as his temple name after his death (*ZZTJ* 293:9554). Usually, the founder of the states received Taizu as their temple name.

Initially, the Later Han dynasty was established to fight against the Khitans. Fortunately, Later Han was able to obtain North China smoothly due to Liao Taizong's sudden death. This perplexing situation led to no treaties being made between the two states during Later Han's occupation of North China.⁵⁸² Northern Han's desperate circumstances eventually led to Liu Chong adhering to the relations Later Jin had with Liao rather than that of Later Han, even though Liu Chong considered himself a successor of the Later Han dynasty.

It seems like that the process of Northern Han becoming a vassal of Liao took some time. The initial request for installation, following Later Jin's precedent, was sent in the first month of 951.⁵⁸³ According to *ZZTJ*, in the same month, Liu Chong "plundered" (*kou* 寇) Jinzhou 晉州 in Later Zhou with ten thousand cavalry. Before long, Liu Chong "attacked" (*gong* 攻) the prefecture from five directions but was not successful.⁵⁸⁴ Afterwards, the Northern Han court sent Li Bian 李辯 to Liao for military aid, but there is no subsequent reference specifying if the Liao court provided any military aid.

In the fourth month of 951, Liao Shizong explicitly solicited tribute from the Northern Han court by simultaneously informing them that Later Zhou also sent envoys. As a response to this delegation, Liu Chong sent a letter (*shu*) asking for official installation.⁵⁸⁵ The actual installation as a vassal was in the sixth month.⁵⁸⁶ After being installed as emperor by the Liao court, Liu Chong asks for military support again in the seventh month. Finally, after eight

⁵⁸² Liu Zhiyuan sent envoys to the Liao court three times to provide tribute when he was a mere general. However, after he founded the dynasty, he did not send a single delegation to Liao. Liao tried making friendly relations with the Han court in 951 by sending a delegation. However, by the time the envoys arrived, Later Han was replaced by Later Zhou.

⁵⁸³ *ZZTJ* 290:9453.

⁵⁸⁴ *ZZTJ* 290:9455.

⁵⁸⁵ *ZZTJ* 290:9460.

⁵⁸⁶ *LS* 5:66; *ZZTJ* 290:9462. At the installation, Liu Chong changed his name to Liu Min 劉旻.

months of attempting to establish relations, Northern Han received its first military aid from Liao. With the support from the Liao court, Liu Chong sent Li Cungui 李存瓌 as Bandit-suppression Commissioner 招討使 to attack Later Zhou in the ninth month.⁵⁸⁷ However, it seemed unsuccessful because the Liao court officials, Shuya 述輒 and Ouliseng 嘔里僧, rebelled and killed Liao Shizong in the same month. Later, there was another joint attack in the tenth month. Five thousand Liao cavalry joined two thousand Northern Han soldiers and attacked Jinzhou. Severe weather alongside Guo Wei's proactive boosting of military morale forced the Liao and Northern Han troops to withdraw from Jinzhou in the twelfth month. According to *ZZTJ*, due to this military fiasco, Liu Chong decided not to invade Later Zhou for a while.⁵⁸⁸ Northern Han invaded Fuzhou 府州 again in the first month of 952 but was successfully thwarted by Zhe Deyi 折德宸, the Defense Commissioner 防禦使 of Later Zhou.

The Gaoping Battle: The Unintended Consequences

Liu Chong was delighted to hear of Guo Wei's death in the first month of 954 and plotted another attack on Later Zhou. In the second month of 954, in addition to the ten thousand cavalry from the Liao court, three thousand soldiers from Northern Han marched towards Luzhou 潞州. After attacking Luzhou, Liu Chong stationed his vanguard headed by Zhang Yuanhui 張元徽 at Lianghou station 梁侯驛, successfully defending against the first counterattack by Later Zhou.

⁵⁸⁷ *ZZTJ* 290:9462.

⁵⁸⁸ *ZZTJ* 290:9470.

This battle was not only significant to Northern Han, but also very important to the young ruler, Guo Rong (formerly Chai Rong 柴榮),⁵⁸⁹ because it was the perfect opportunity to receive recognition from his court.⁵⁹⁰ The young Guo Rong was adamant about leading the troops against Liu Chong which can be clearly seen in *JWDS*, *XWDS*, and *ZZTJ*.⁵⁹¹ Here I follow *ZZTJ*'s version.

The officials altogether said, “Since Liu Chong ran away from Pingyang, his power decreased and morale was blocked, so he will certainly not come [to battle] in person. Your Majesty has been newly installed. It takes days to build a mausoleum and people’s minds will be easily in disturbance so that [you] should not behave rashly and should have the generals defend against them.” The emperor said, “[Liu] Chong [thinks] its opportune that I am bereaved [of my father], and because I am installed at a young age, he bore a mind to swallow *tianxia*. He will surely [lead the troops] here, so I cannot [avoid] not going [and taking the lead.] As Feng Dao firmly opposed it, the emperor said, “whilom when Emperor Taizong of Tang pacified *tianxia*, there was no time that he did not lead the troops. How dare can I pilfer the comforts? [Feng] Dao said, “I have not realized if Your Majesty could become like Taizong of Tang or not.” The emperor said, “Since my military power is strong, defeating Liu Chong is like pressing an egg with mountain!” [Feng] Dao said, “I have not realized if Your Majesty could become like mountain or not.”⁵⁹²

羣臣皆曰：「劉崇自平陽遁走以來，勢蹙氣沮，必不敢自來。陛下新即位，山陵有日，人心易搖，不宜輕動，宜命將禦之。」帝曰：「崇幸我大喪，輕朕年少新立，有吞天下之心，此必自來，朕不可不往。」馮道固爭之，帝曰：「昔唐太宗定天下，未嘗不自行，朕何敢偷安！」道曰：「未審陛下能為唐太宗否？」帝曰：「以吾兵力之強，破劉崇如山壓卵耳！」道曰：「未審陛下能為山否？」

⁵⁸⁹ Chai Rong was an adoptive son of Guo Wei. He was a nephew of the empress of Guo Wei (*JWDS* 114:1509).

⁵⁹⁰ For details of military strategies during the battle, see Yu Wŏn-jun 유원준, “Puksong ch’o Songgun ūi chŏnsul kwa chŏllyak e kwanhan yŏn’gu (1): Chu Sejong ūi Pukhan kongnyak sarye rŭl chungshim ūro” 북송 초 宋軍의 戰術과 戰力에 관한 연구(1): 周 세종의 北漢 공략 사례를 중심으로, *Chungguksa yŏn’gu* 중국사 연구 106 (2017): 27-58.

⁵⁹¹ *JWDS* 114:1511; *XWDS* 54:615; *ZZTJ* 291:9502-9503.

⁵⁹² *ZZTJ* 291:9502-9503.

In this conversation, Guo Rong clearly realized that Liu Chong had been on the alert for the chance to take over *tianxia*. His father's death proved to be that ripe opportunity that Liu Chong was waiting for. Yet, court officials clearly opposed Guo Rong's idea of personally leading the military. On the surface, it seems that officials were worried about any potential disturbance since it has only been a month since Guo Wei died. However, the actual reason for the officials' opposition was their lack of trust in Guo Rong. Feng Dao, the Secretariat Director 中書令 and official in charge of building a mausoleum for the deceased emperor, bluntly challenged Guo Rong's self-comparison to Taizong of Tang. Furthermore, he ignored Guo Rong's self-proclaimed ability to defeat Liu Chong. As a novice emperor, Guo Rong could not refute Feng Dao's reply. However, it seems that not only officials in the court, but also the regional military commissioner doubted the new emperor's military capabilities. Eventually, Guo Rong led his troops personally to fight against Liu Chong. As Guo Rong was driven by impulsiveness, he was advised to be more composed.⁵⁹³

Due to Guo Rong's swift defense, both the Northern Han and Liao militaries had a difficult time seizing Gaoping. In the beginning, Northern Han seemed to be dominating. Zhang Yuanhui, leading Northern Han's vanguard, defeated Fan Aineng 樊愛能 and He Hui 何徽's Right Military 右軍, and captured one thousand Zhou infantry, endangering Guo Rong's troops. However, there were three factors which led to Guo Rong's successful defense of Gaoping. First was Zhang Yuanhui's sudden death. As he was killed by a Zhou soldier, the Northern Han military became demoralized. Also, the change in wind direction was decisive. In the beginning, the wind blew from the northeast. Later, it changed directions and strongly blew from the south which assisted the Zhou military in taking the lead in the battle. Furthermore, the Liao military

⁵⁹³ ZZTJ 291:9503.

was less active than that of Northern Han in the beginning. The Liao general Yang Gun 楊袞 did not take the lead in battle after witnessing the strength of the Zhou military and did not support the dwindling Northern Han military, choosing to watch the situation develop.⁵⁹⁴

Guo Rong's victory was limited to his defense of Gaoping. Even though the Later Zhou military became dominant after a few battles, they were unable to hold onto additionally acquired prefectures including those of Northern Han.⁵⁹⁵ In the sixth month of 954, Guo Rong eventually returned to Bianliang. He left backup troops in Jinyang, but finally withdrew without producing any results. However, successfully defending his territory, Guo Rong was able to manage state affairs without heeding the advice of court officials. On the other side of the battle, Liu Chong became ill because of his loss in Gaoping and soon passed away. The Northern Han military failed to recover Gaoping, resulting in a battle with neither party gaining any substantial territory. However, this battle led to some unintended consequences. Guo Rong's successful defense during the Gaoping battle cooled Liu Chong's aggressive posture in his quest to reunite the Middle Kingdom.

The Relations between Northern Han and Liao: A Shrimp between Whales⁵⁹⁶

After the Gaoping Battle, Guo Rong focused on his conquest of Later Shu and Southern Tang, purposefully avoiding an attack on Northern Han. In a discussion concerning his unification

⁵⁹⁴ ZZTJ 291:9506. As Yang Kun came back to the Liao court without results, Muzong became angry and imprisoned him (QDGZ 5:52).

⁵⁹⁵ In the early fifth month of 954, Liaozhou 遼州, Xianzhou 憲州, Lanzhou 嵐州, Fenzhou 汾州, Shizhou 石州, Xinzhou 沁州, and Xinzhou 忻州 were already under Guo Rong's power.

⁵⁹⁶ I borrowed this expression from the tetra-character idiom in Korea, *kyŏngjŏnhasa* 鯨戰蝦死, which translates to "shrimps die when whales fight." This metaphor speaks to the reality in which a weaker player will perish when involved in the fight of stronger players. Here, the weaker Northern Han was territorially and relationally situated between the stronger Song and Liao states.

plans, court official Wang Pu 王朴 advised him not to attack Northern Han because they are “the enemies whom are prepared to die” (*bisi zhi kou* 必死之寇).⁵⁹⁷ Listening to Wang Pu’s advice, Guo Rong decided to rather focus on conquering the south starting from the fifth month of 955.

According to *ZZTJ*, Northern Han emperor Liu Chengjun (r. 954-968), who succeeded Liu Chong, was a weak ruler. It was recorded that following the Battle of Gaoping, Liu Chengjun lost his will to fight against Later Zhou.⁵⁹⁸ After the Gaoping battle, although Guo Rong focused on invading southern states, Liu Chengjun did not actively respond. However, it is difficult to know if the Northern Han ruler abandoned his plans to reclaim the former Northern Han territory. *LS* details the delegations sent between Northern Han and Liao.⁵⁹⁹ Especially after the Gaoping battle, there were frequent delegations from Northern Han to the Liao court discussing military works. From the perspective of Liao, Northern Han was the last bastion of defense against Later Zhou. Although it was initially Liu Chong who suggested an alliance to reclaim Later Han’s territory, Liao’s alliance with Northern Han was beneficial for both parties even without Liu Chengjun’s proactiveness to retake the “Middle Kingdom.”

The reign of Liu Chengjun oversaw a continuation of the lord-vassal relationship. Because Liu Chengjun followed his father’s policy to serve Liao as an inferior state, Northern Han actively responded to Liao’s call for military aid. *ZZTJ* records two incidents related to the military cooperation between Northern Han and Liao. In the eleventh month of 957, Liao sent General Cui Xun 崔勳 to attack Luzhou 潞州, a prefecture of Later Zhou. Liu Chengjun dispatched another general to cooperate with Cui Xun.⁶⁰⁰ After successfully defeating Southern

⁵⁹⁷ *ZZTJ* 292:9526.

⁵⁹⁸ *ZZTJ* 293:9574.

⁵⁹⁹ See Chapter 5 appendix.

⁶⁰⁰ *ZZTJ* 293:9574; *QDGS* 5:52.

Tang, Guo Rong suddenly attacked Liao. In the fifth month of 959, Muzong of Liao immediately dispatched envoys to the Northern Han court and ordered the Northern Han to cause a disturbance on the Later Zhou frontier.⁶⁰¹

The frequent discussion of military affairs continued even after Later Zhou collapsed. During the reign of Taizu (r. 960-976) of Song, Northern Han continuously invaded Song, sometimes working together with Liao to attack the Song territory. For instance, in the ninth month of 963, Northern Han collaborated with Liao to attack Pingjin 平晉.⁶⁰² Every time they were in danger, they asked for military aid from the Liao court with Liao almost always reciprocating with military aid. The portrayal of Liu Chengjun as a weak ruler seems to be misplaced when examining his consistent military excursions into Later Zhou and Song.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined significant events surrounding three crucial players of this period, answering three central questions during the process. Can Taizong's reign over North China be considered an interregnum? How did Southern Tang and Northern Han fit into the bigger picture of diplomacy during this period? And did these states have any intent to conquer the "Middle Kingdom?"

Song historians considered the period of Liao Taizong's reign over North China as an interregnum, literally "no lord in the Central Plain" (*zhongyuan wuzhu*) or "no lord in the Middle Kingdom" (*zhongguo wuzhu*), betraying their Sinocentric perception of the interregnum.

⁶⁰¹ ZZTJ 294:9597. At this moment, because Guo Rong already left for the south, Liu Chengjun did not send troops.

⁶⁰² *Song shi* 1:15.

However, this period clearly saw a lord in North China. Unlike previous nomadic rulers, Taizong's conquest of the "Middle Kingdom" was not just another plundering session. Taizong had a clear motive to punish Chudi, the emperor of Later Jin; the unequivocal intention to rule over North China; and the will to integrate North China into the Liao empire. Taizong's intent can be further seen by the fact that he installed himself as emperor with the unanimous consent of Jin court officials rather than installing a vassal regime like Later Jin. Although Taizong's sudden death and unstable succession caused the eventual evacuation of the Liao military, five months of Liao rule over North China is undeniable. Taizong's implementation of peaceful, yet effective strategies laid the groundwork for the Middle Kingdom's smooth transition from being its own sovereign state to becoming a part of the newly named Great Liao. The notion of the "Middle Kingdom" in the tenth century briefly disappeared with its incorporation into Great Liao, and Khitan Liao inarguably cemented its name as one of the heavyweights amongst the states competing for hegemony during this period.

What is more questionable is whether every ruler of the Five Dynasties really pursued the restoration of Tang's past glory. From the beginning of this period, Zhu Wen recognized Wang Jian's emperorship in Shu. Although Zhuangzong of Later Tang was able to restore the Shu region, he allowed the installation of many of the southern rulers as kings of states. Later, Later Jin, as a vassal, voluntarily ceded the Sixteen Prefectures to Liao, its lord. Later Han could barely maintain their territorial *status quo*. Guo Rong seems to be the only emperor of Later Zhou who actively pursued the unification, only after his victory against Northern Han in Gaoping. According to *ZZTJ*, Guo Rong had felt chagrined that the Middle Kingdom had continued to shrink after the Huang Chao rebellion in late 870s. After the Gaoping battle, he revealed his will

to pacify *tianxia* and was receptive of plans to recover “old territory” (*jiujiang* 舊疆).⁶⁰³ At the time, Guo Rong’s conception of *tianxia* was divided into the five regions; Southern Tang, Later Shu, Liao, and Northern Han in addition to the territory of Later Zhou.⁶⁰⁴

Through the analysis of these power struggles, I suggest the alternative period designation, the New Three Kingdoms period. Although the Five Dynasties was one of the key players in the *realpolitik* of the time, they were certainly not the only dominant player that deserves recognition during this period, especially considering the difficulty in which they had in preserving their shrinking territory. My selection of these three kingdoms came from the three criteria of “self-recognition,” “unification desire,” and “relationships.” When evaluating all three of these criteria, only four groups come to mind—the Five Dynasties, Liao, Southern Tang, and Northern Han.

All four of these states had the conviction to reunify the “Middle Kingdom” and recognized themselves as having the legitimacy to rule it. Even though it was a small state resided in Bingzhou, the Shatuo Turkic Northern Han was established by the remnants of the Later Han imperial family for the sole purpose of restoring their control of North China by fighting against the Later Zhou court. In the case of Southern Tang, after the fall of Later Tang, the first ruler Li Bian fabricated his genealogy and claimed ancestral lineage back to that of the Tang imperial family to legitimize himself as successor of both Tang and Later Tang. Both Li Bian and his successor Li Jing had continually tried to recover North China. Despite his efforts, Li Jing became a vassal of Later Zhou in 956. Although the Five Dynasties oversaw a reduction in its territory, Later Zhou’s Guo Rong actively pursued the restoration of *tianxia* after the Battle

⁶⁰³ ZZTJ 292:9524.

⁶⁰⁴ He deplored that Wu 吳, Shu 蜀, You 幽, and Bing 并 were not yet unified since Later Jin (ZZTJ 292:9525).

of Gaoping. By the time Later Zhou was founded, the legitimacy of the Middle Kingdom was practically divided into three: Later Zhou situated in North China; Southern Tang, namely Tang's successor, in the Jiangnan region; and Northern Han, a successor state of Later Han, in the Taiyuan area. All three had the intent to unify or restore their old territory. Liao similarly had a claim to North China demonstrated by their conquest of Later Jin and the assimilation of the newly gained territory into the combined state of Great Liao. Even after their short-lived reign of North China, the Khitans schemed to conquer North China with both Southern Tang and Northern Han, and unreservedly provided military aid to Northern Han in their concerted war efforts against Later Zhou.

Looking at the criterion of relationship, only three of these four states pass the test. Northern Han played a significant role in shielding Liao from the attacks of Later Zhou and Song until its defeat by Song in 979. However, although Northern Han played a significant role in the fragile diplomacy of the region and continually attacked Later Zhou and Song, Northern Han was still a vassal of Liao and asked for military aid frequently. The other three states on the other hand generally enjoyed relations as equals during this period. However, if we are to be truly impartial, the Later Jin court was a vassal state of Liao while Southern Tang had a fairly equal diplomatic relationship with Liao. While the rulers of Later Jin were treated as sons and vassals of Liao, the Southern Tang ruler, Li Bian, was considered an older brother to Liao Taizong. Through the scrutiny of not only official records but also the two *NTSs*, it is highly likely that the diplomacy between Liao and Southern Tang was set on an equal footing from the beginning. Although Later Jin proved to be subservient to Liao, I give the Five Dynasties an equal third to *tianxia* on the grounds that over its duration, the Five Dynasties generally engaged in a diplomatic relationship of parity with Liao, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Considering these three criteria and taking an integrationist approach to Sino-Inner Asian history, I reframe the legacy of Tang to be the “New Three Kingdoms”: Liao, the Five Dynasties (Later Jin, Later Han, and Later Zhou), and Southern Tang.

Conclusion

Attributed to the thirteenth century, the epitaph of the Tangut-Mongol general, Xili Gambu's 昔里鈐部 (1191-1259) traced his lineage back to "the Shatuo noble stock" (Shatuo *guizhong*).⁶⁰⁵ Here, *guizhong* is the term which Ouyang Xiu used in *XWDS* to refer to the Shatuo. While the veracity of Xili Gambu's alleged lineage has been contested, the claim itself is of importance. For someone of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to claim ancestry back to the Shatuo who existed three centuries prior, we can speculate that being a Shatuo descendant held some significance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Who were the Shatuo and what made them special even centuries later?

In the first part of my dissertation, I explore the establishment of Shatuo identity and its development through the late Tang and the Five Dynasties periods. I argue that Shatuo identity was flexible, working as ethnic, political, and military identities. As early as the seventh century, there was an ethnic group of people called the Shatuo who were a branch of the Western Turks. However, starting from the ninth century, the Shatuo Turks evolved into political group representing multiple ethnic groups tied to the Tang political entity of the "Shatuo Prefecture." As "Shatuo," literally "grand desert," implies, nomadic groups who shared the "desert" as a common space gathered under the banner of the Shatuo group. After the Shatuo general, Zhuxie Chixin, received the Tang imperial surname Li, the Shatuo were able to become a "noble stock." In contrast to prior bestowals of imperial surnames to foreign generals, this conferral was officially registered under the entry of "Court of the Imperial Clan" in *Tang Huiyao*. From this

⁶⁰⁵ Qian Daxin 錢大昕, *Nian'ershi kaoyi* 廿二史考異 (Fenghuang chubanshe, 2016), 1545-1546. On Xili Gambu, see Ruth Dunnell, "Xili Gambu and the Myth of Shatuo Descent: Genealogical Anxiety and Family History in Yuan China," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 21 (2014-2015): 83-102.

point onward, the Shatuo-Li family served as the *kernel* or the core “elite” group for the rest of the Shatuo, providing legitimacy to the Shatuo’s rise as rulers in the tenth century.

Chapter 1 explored the origins and genealogy of the Shatuo. In my analysis of Li Keyong’s epitaph which traced the Shatuo-Li family’s lineage back to the Xueyantuo group, a prominent Turkic group in the seventh century, I found that this ancestry was most likely fabricated to provide legitimation to the family. In the examination of other Shatuo epitaphs, I discovered that the Shatuo self-designation dissipated in the tenth century. This phenomenon to be similar to that of the disappearance of the Avars as argued by Walter Pohl. In the ninth century, the Shatuo appellation developed a deep-seated connection to and dependence on the Tang political entity of the Shatuo Prefecture. Henceforth, the Shatuo appellation became meaningless after the demise of Tang and establishment of the Later Tang state.

In Chapter 2, I examined stereotypes pertaining to the Shatuo Turks and apply a set of criteria to gauge their identity—“languages,” “physiognomy,” “customs,” and “occupation.” I found that none of the criteria can be absolute factors to distinguish the Shatuo from other groups of people. While the Shatuo people used their own language, they were at least bilingual or sometimes multilingual. In terms of physiognomy, they were stereotyped to have “deep eyes and high noses,” but these traits were germane to other ethnic groups. The customs that the Shatuo rulers practiced such as praying to heaven were the common rituals of many Turkic peoples. The occupation of herding sheep and horses which is most attributed to the Shatuo can be found amongst many other groups as well. However, a dichotomy within the occupations of the Shatuo seems to set them apart. There was a distinction between a lower stratum of Shatuo who were primarily herders and an upper stratum of “elite” Shatuo made up of court and military officials exemplified by the Shatuo-Li family. Interestingly, the “elite” Shatuo identity is established

without blood ties and was preserved through a unique system of adoptions. The Shatuo system of adoptions differed from previous mass adoption cases such as An Lushan and Yang Fugong in Tang. Moreover, Shatuo elite adoptees were able to equally compete for the throne with biological sons.

In the second part of the dissertation, I explored the relations between the Five Dynasties and the surrounding states, with a special focus on how the Shatuo Turkic rulers managed to maintain their rule over the “Middle Kingdom.” In Chapter 3, I dealt with how the Shatuo-Li family forged an alliance with the Khitans. Hinging on the brotherly relations created by Li Keyong and Abaoji, both states generationally enjoyed friendly relations. Such relations are exemplified by the defection of Yelü Bei, a Khitan heir apparent, to the Later Tang court. Through the analysis of the diplomatic rhetoric, I argued that diplomatic parity between the “Middle Kingdom” and Inner Asia existed a century prior to the Convent of Chanyuan (1005) between Song and Liao.

Chapter 4 focused on the relations between the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms. To have a clear sense of divisions and relations between the states, I first delved into the concept of the “Middle Kingdom” which steadily changed in meaning from the Northern and Southern Dynasties period to the Tang dynasty. During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, I found that the Middle Kingdom was used predominantly to refer to the Five Dynasties. Many of the Ten Kingdoms became independent under the Shatuo Turkic dynasties which bestowed the title of “king of state” (*guowang*) to certain rulers of the Ten Kingdoms, eventually shrinking the Middle Kingdom to the North China region. In reflection of the power politics of this period, I challenged the periodization of “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms,” which was originally suggested by the Song historian, Ouyang Xiu.

In Chapter 5, I examined the stature of the states throughout Sino-Inner Asia to ascertain the political order of the time. I started by questioning the designation of “interregnum” which had been used in traditional records to refer to Liao Taizong’s rule over the Middle Kingdom. I argued that the characterization of Liao Taizong’s rule over North China as an interregnum should be reconsidered as he was recognized as a legitimate ruler over the Middle Kingdom, having been welcomed by both Han and non-Han peoples. Further, through the application of criteria consisting of “relationships,” “unification desire,” and “self-recognition”; I determined that there were three key players who pursued the restoration of the Tang territory—Liao, the Five Dynasties, and Southern Tang. I concluded the chapter by suggesting the “New Three Kingdoms” as a sensible periodization for this span of time.

Source criticism of the medieval historical records was crucial in my deliberation of ethnicity, identity, and diplomacy during this period. By distinguishing sources of *emic* and *etic* perspectives, I revealed how sources written by Song literati in the eleventh century harbored anti-foreign sentiment. Compiled under the supervision of Shatuo dynastic courts, *JTS* should be considered a Shatuo-sympathetic text. *JTS* did not characterize the Shatuo as “barbarians” (*yidi*) in contrast to *XTS* and *XDWS*, both of which were supervised by the same compiler, Ouyang Xiu. As the sole compiler of *XWDS*, Ouyang Xiu was especially judgmental of non-Han ethnic groups. His records of the “Four Barbarians” in the appendix (*fulu* 附錄) was unprecedented in the tradition of Chinese historiography as powerful non-Han groups were usually recorded in their own separate biographies (*zhuan* 傳). Yet, he not only relegated the Khitans, the most significant non-Han group in the tenth and eleventh centuries, to the appendix, but also erased various diplomatic rhetoric attributed to their diplomatic exchanges which were described in detail in other official histories such as *JWDS*, *LS*, *ZZTJ*, and *CFYG*. This intentional erasure of

the diplomatic rhetoric seemed to reflect the sentiment of the Song literati on their ostensible diplomatic parity with Liao. In addition, I used *LS* alongside the Five Dynasties-centric sources such as *JWDS*, *CFYG*, and *XWDS* to discern all perspectives on the diplomacy of the time. While *LS* should not be considered as more accurate than the Five Dynasties-centric sources, *LS* does provide crucial Liao-centric perspectives on the diplomatic relations between the two states. There were many instances when the diplomatic rhetoric recorded in *LS* illustrated a vastly different account of the diplomatic exchanges recorded in the Five Dynasties-centric sources. Bearing in mind that *LS* was compiled based on the “Veritable Records of Imperial Dynasty” (*huangchao shilu*) of the Liao court, I regard *LS* to be an authentic source representing Liao perspectives.

In this study of the rise of the Shatuo Turks and their rule during the “New Three Kingdoms” period, I conclude by touching on the legacy of the Shatuo. In the post-Tang world of uncertain power and diplomacy, the brotherly covenant sharing *tianxia* between the Shatuo and the Khitans set precedents which reshaped the diplomacy and politics in the region for the next centuries. Specifically, the Shatuo-Khitan covenant marked a clear historical divide in the relations between the Middle Kingdom and Inner Asia. Before the Shatuo-Khitan covenant, three key features defined the relationship between the Middle Kingdom and Inner Asia. First, there were a separation of worlds as shown through the Sino-Tibetan Treaty in which the Tibetan ruler and the Tang ruler ruled over their own sovereign worlds. Second, marriage alliances or *heqin*, were crucial in establishing relations between the two regimes. And lastly, while there were many instances in which nomadic states invaded the Middle Kingdom, they always left. When Inner Asian groups came to the Middle Kingdom in periods prior, they pillaged border towns and cities. Importantly, after obtaining their fill of loot, the Inner Asian nomads left to return to their

territory without staying to conquer the territory. Hundreds of these cases can be seen throughout the relations between Han and the Xiongnu, and between Tang and the Uyghurs.

After the tenth century, specifically following the Shatuo-Khitans covenant, these three features disappear from the diplomacy of the region. Notably, a continuation of this covenant between Middle Kingdom and Inner Asia was exemplified by the Covenant of Chanyuan between Song and the Khitans in 1005. Carrying on the legacy of the Shatuo Turks and the Khitans, not only did Inner Asian nomads continue to share *tianxia* with the Middle Kingdom, but they also continued to conquer and rule over the Middle Kingdom. Take for example the case of the Inner Asian nomadic group, the Jurchens. In the twelfth century, the Jurchens, who originally served under the Khitans, overthrew the Khitans, inherited their territory, and established the Jin dynasty (1115-1234). Within a few decades, the Jurchens attacked the Song dynasty, captured the Song emperor, and held him as a hostage. They also soon conquered the northern half of the Song territory, forcing the Song court to retreat to the south.

On the *jiwei* day, the Song envoys, Wei Qi, etc. came with a state letter. In the letter they did not designate themselves as “great,” but referred to [themselves as] “nephew, the emperor of Song,” and designated [the Jin emperor], “by doing obeisance again, offering up [this] letter to uncle, the Great Jin emperor.” [They also sent] two hundred thousand silk and silver as presents.⁶⁰⁶

己未，宋通問使魏杞等以國書來。書不稱「大」，稱「姪宋皇帝」，稱名，「再拜奉書于叔大金皇帝」。歲幣二十萬。

In 1165, Song Xiaozong (r. 1162-1189) sent envoys to Jin Shizong (r. 1161-1189) with presents.

Notably, in this record, we can see that both Song and Jin emperors recognized each other as

⁶⁰⁶ See Toqto'a 脱脱, *Jin shi* 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 6:135.

huangdi, shared *tianxia*, and also had nephew-uncle relations. This is very much a continuation of the relations between the Shatuo Turks and the Khitans in the tenth century.

Interestingly, the precedents set in the tenth century also seem to have a connection with the Mongols. Yelü Chucai, the ninth generation descendent of Abaoji and eighth generation descendent of Yelü Bei, was a Khitan statesman from the imperial clan of the Liao dynasty. After the Liao dynasty collapsed, his family thrived under the Jurchen Jin court, and upon the conquest of Jurchen Jin by Chinggis Khan, the first Great Khan of the Mongol Empire, Yelü Chucai worked as an official in the Mongol court. When Ögedei Khan, the second ruler of the Mongol empire, was deliberating on the Song territory to the south, many of his confidants advised him to kill all the people and use the lands for pastures. However, Yelü Chucai, advised him to rule over the territory instead.

[The emperor's] confidants, Biedie and others, said, "The Han people are no benefit to the state; [we] could get rid of all the people and make [the land] as pasture." [Yelü] Chucai said, "Your Majesty will attack the south soon; the military will certainly need capital. If we equitably decide the Central Plain's land and trade duties, in addition to the benefits from salt, wine, iron smelting, mountain and marsh, [we] can obtain five hundred thousand taels of silver, eighty thousand bolts of silk and more than four hundred thousand *shi* of grain, which are enough [for us to] provide [for the expedition], how can [we] say it is not useful?" The emperor said, "You try this for me."⁶⁰⁷

近臣別迭等言：「漢人無補於國，可悉空其人以為牧地。」楚材曰：「陛下將南伐，軍需宜有所資，誠均定中原地稅、商稅、鹽、酒、鐵冶、山澤之利，歲可得銀五十萬兩、帛八萬匹、粟四十餘萬石，足以供給，何謂無補哉？」帝曰：「卿試為朕行之。」

In this record, Yelü Chucai pointed to the benefits of the prosperous Central Plain territory such as the potential taxes to be gained. Ögedei Khan eventually agreed to Yelü Chucai's incessant requests and decided to conquer and rule over the Middle Kingdom. While we can only guess the

⁶⁰⁷ *Yuan shi* 146:3458.

extent to which he was aware of the happenings and diplomacy of the tenth and following centuries, Yelü Chucai helped Chinggis Khan's son, Ögedei Khan, in his conquest and administration of the Middle Kingdom.

Many of the seismic changes of the medieval period were in fact shaped by the identity formation and diplomatic relations of the tenth century. The use of a variety of sources along with a judicious use of source criticism reveals a multi-faceted and flexible Shatuo identity. The Shatuo Turks serve as a refutation to the one-sided acculturation process of Sinicization, questioning what "China" was in the medieval era. The Shatuo Turks ruled as one of the three main polities in a Sino-Inner Asian society that was aware of and accepted the mingling of diverse ethnicities and cultures, in contrast to the Song literati's insistence of an ethnic hierarchy topped by the superior "Han Chinese." Contrary to the dominant narrative that has continued from the Song dynasty to the present, minority ethnic groups, particularly nomadic groups from Inner Asia, were crucial in the making of China's past and present. Moreover, by fashioning an "elite" identity based on their nomadic roots, the Shatuo Turks legitimated themselves as effective rulers, built multiple states including three of the Five Dynasties, and ultimately forged a new balance of power across a connected Asian world. My research highlights the significance of the Shatuo Turks as agents of change who sparked a new era of Sino-Inner Asian history in which the Middle Kingdom and Inner Asia shared *tianxia*, and thus shared the combined world of Sino-Inner Asia. Specifically, the interstate relations of the tenth century marked a watershed in which Inner Asian nomads could lay claim and rule over the Middle Kingdom, reshaping the Sino-Inner Asian world for centuries. Hence, I suggest that this period should be viewed from the perspective of an integrated Sino-Inner Asian history rather than a Chinese dynastic history. Through this portrayal of an interconnected Asia, I argue that the Shatuo Turks were the

architects of a transregional multipolar hegemony over a world in which the ethnic, cultural, and political identities of peoples and states were fluid—when “China,” as a cultural and political hegemon, was gone.

Appendix

Chapter 1

Table 1.1 Bestowals of the Imperial Surname in Tang

Emperor	Date (Y.M)	Previous Name	Changed Name	Notes	Sources	<i>Tang Huiyao Records</i>
Gaozu	Unknown	Bing Can 丙粲	Li Can 李粲	His record of receiving the imperial surname is recorded in his grandson's, Li Yuanhong's 李元紘, biography.	JTS 98:3073 XTS 126:4419	
Gaozu	618	Xu Shiji 徐世勣	Li Shiji 李世勣	*registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 1:9 JTS 67:2484 XTS 93:3818 Z 186:5823	THY 65:1141
Gaozu	619.9	Luo Yi 羅藝	Li Yi 李藝	Luo Yan submitted to the Tang court. *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 1:10 JTS 56:2278 XTS 92:3807 Z 187:5866	THY 65:1141
Gaozu	620.3	Liu Jizhen 劉季真	Li Jizhen 李季真	Hu 胡 from Lishi 離石.	JTS 56:2282 XTS 87:3732 Z 188:5879	
Gaozu	620.6	Du Fewei 杜伏威	Li Fewei 李伏威	He defected to the Tang court in 619. *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 1:11; 56:2268 XTS 92:3800 Z 188: 5884	THY 65:1141
Gaozu	620.1	Gao Kaidao 高開道	Li Kaidao 李開道	Submitted to the Tang court. *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 1:11; 55:2256 XTS 86:3714 Z 188:5892	THY 65:1141

Gaozu	621.1	Hu Da'en 胡大恩	Li Da'en 李大恩	Submitted to the Tang court. *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 1:11 Z 188:5900	THY 65:1141
Gaozu	622.8	Guo Zihe 郭子和	Li Zihe 李子和	received imperial surname after defeating Liu Heita 劉黑闥	JTS 56:2282 XTS 92:3804 Z 190:5954	
Taizong	627	Tudiji 突地稽	Li ?	As a Mohe chieftain, he submitted to the Tang court. His son is Li Jinxing's 李謹行. (Z 202:6371)	JTS 199b:5350 JTS 199b:5359 XTS 110:4123 XTS 219:6168	
Taizong	635	Tuoba Chici 拓拔 赤辭	Li Chici 李赤辭	Originally from Tangut. Taizong appointed Tuoba Chici as Military Commissioner of Xirong Prefecture and bestowed him the imperial surname.	JTS 198:5292 XTS 221a:6215	
Taizong	630-639	Ashina Simo 阿史 那思摩	Li Simo 李思摩	A Turkic prince. Later installed as a qaghan by Taizong.	JTS 194a:5163	
Taizong	648.11	Kuge 窟哥	Li Kuge 李窟哥	A Khitan chieftain who submitted to the Tang court. His grandson is Li Jinzhong 李盡忠.	JTS 3:61 JTS 199b:5350 XTS 219:6168 Z 199:6263	
Taizong	648.11	Keduzhe 可度者	Li Keduzhe 李可度 者	Defected to the Tang court and received the imperial surname during the Zhenguan years. A record of his descendant, Li Dapu 李大酺, is seen during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. (Z 210:6672)	JTS 3:61 JTS 199b:5354 XTS 219:6173 Z 199:6263	
Wu Zetian	690	Princess Qianjin 千金公主	Wu ?	Princess Qianjin was a daughter of Gaozu. She voluntarily requested to become Empress Wu's daughter.	Z 204:6467	
Wu Zetian	690	Fu Youyi 傅遊藝	Wu Youyi 武遊藝	Fu Youyi contributed to the establishment of Wu Zetian's Zhou dynasty.	JTS 186a:4842 Z 204:6467	

Wu Zetian	690	Tang Ruizong	Wu Zetian bestowed her surname to Ruizong.	Z 204:6467
Wu Zetian	690	Cen Changqian 岑長情	Wu Zetian bestowed the surname to officials after she became emperor.	Z 204:6468
Wu Zetian	690	Zhang Qianxu 張虔勗	Wu Zetian bestowed the surname to officials after she became emperor.	Z 204:6468
Wu Zetian	690	Qiu Shenji 丘神勣	Wu Zetian bestowed the surname to officials after she became emperor.	Z 204:6468
Wu Zetian	690	Lai Zixun 來子珣	Wu Zetian bestowed the surname to officials after she became emperor.	Z 204:6468
Wu Zetian	691	Li Guangxun 李光順	Li Guangxun was a son of deceased Crown Prince Zhanghuai, Li Xian.	Z 204:6473
Wu Zetian	691	Li Shouli 李守禮	Li Shouli was a son of deceased Crown Prince Zhanghuai, Li Xian.	Z 204:6473
Wu Zetian	691	Li Shouyi 李守義	Li Shouyi was a son of deceased Crown Prince Zhanghuai, Li Xian.	Z 204:6473
Wu Zetian	691	Princess Changxin 長信縣主	Princess Changxin was a daughter of deceased Crown Prince Zhanghuai, Li Xian.	Z 204:6473
Wu Zetian	699	Li Zhe 李哲	Li Zhe, Zhongzong, became a crown prince in 698. (Z 206:6534)	Z 206:6539
Wu Zetian	700	Li Kaigu 李楷固	Previously, Li Kaigu, a Khitan general, submitted to the Tang court. He contributed to the suppression of the Khitans.	JTS 89:2893 Z 207:6548
Wu Zetian	Unknown	Qibi Ming's wife and mother	Qibi Ming 契苾明 is Qibi Heli's son. Qibi Heli submitted to the Tang court during the reign of Taizong.	XTS 110:4121
Xuanzong	713	Xue Chongjian 薛崇簡	Xue Chongjian dissuaded his mother, Princess Taiping, from rebelling against Xuanzong	Z 210:6685

Xuanzon g	728	?	Li Xiancheng 李獻誠	A Heshui Mohe (Korean: Malgal) chieftain.	JTS 199b:5359 XTS 219:6178
Xuanzon g	752.3	Abusi 阿不思	Li Xianzhong 李獻忠	A Tujue chieftain, defected to the Tang court.	JTS 187b:4903 Z 216:6910
Xuanzon g	755.3	Xi'nuoluo 悉諾邏	Li Zhongxin 李忠信	Prince of Sumpa and Tibetan general submitted to the Tang court.	Z 217:6932
Suzong	757	An Chongzhang 安重璋	Li Baoyu 李抱玉	An Chongzhang to An Baiyu and eventually became Li Baoyi. Asked to change surname from An to Li after An Lushan rebellion.	JTS 132:3646 XTS 138:4619 XTS 75b:3446 Z 221:7076
Suzong	before 759	Unknown (Surname An 安)	Li Guochen 李國臣	Originally came from Hexi. Contributed to suppressing An-Shi rebellion.	XTS 136:4592
Suzong	759.11	Dong Qin 董秦	Li Zhongchen 李忠臣	Defected to the Tang court during the An Lushan rebellion.	JTS 145:3941 Z 221:7088
Suzong	762.11	Zhang Zhongzhi 張忠志	Li Baochen 李寶臣	Also, known as An Zhongzhi. Defected to the Tang court during the An-Shi rebellion. In 778, he asked Emperor Daizong to change his surname back to Zhang. The emperor accepted. (Z 225:7252) In 779, he re-asked the emperor to re-change his surname as Li. The emperor accepted. (Z 225:7256) *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 11:271 JTS 142:3865 XTS 211:5946 XTS 75b:3450 Z 222:7136 THY 65:1143
Daizong	before 763	Ru Chang 茹常	Li Jiaqing 李嘉慶	Li Huaiguang's 李懷光 father. Served as a general of Shuofang. Received the imperial surname possibly during Xuanzong or Suzong era	JTS 121:3491 XTS 224a:6375 Z 223:7147
Daizong	777.8	Cao Lingzhong 曹令忠	Li Yuanzhong 李元忠	Received imperial surname for his meritorious military service	JTS 11:300 JTS 120:3474

Dezong	787.7	Luo Yuanguang 駱元光	Li Yuanliang 李元諒	His ancestors came from Parthia. He contributed to making alliance with Tibet.	JTS 144:3917 XTS 156:4902 Z 232:7495
Dezong	789	Yan Baba 燕八八	Li Chengxu 李承緒	Li Huaiguang's 李懷光 grandson (daughter's son).	JTS 13:368 JTS 121:3495 XTS 224a:6379 Z 233:7519
Xianzong	808	Suodi 索低	Li Suodi 李素低	Suodi was a chieftain of Xi 奚.	JTS 199b:5356
Xianzong	811.5	A'die Guangjin 阿跌光進	Li Guangjin 李光進	A'die received the imperial surname due to his meritorious military service against Wang Chengzong 王承宗.	JTS 14:435 JTS 161:4218 XTS 75b:3452 XTS 171:5183 Z 238:7684
Muzong	822.2	Wang Rijian 王日簡	Li Quanlüe 李全略	Upon installing as Military Commissioner of Henghai Circuit.	JTS 16:495 JTS 143:3906 XTS 213:5997 Z 242:7809
Wuzong	842.8	Wamosi 嗚沒斯	Li Sizhong 李思忠	Wamosi was the great general of Uighurs. He and his brothers with two thousand and six hundred people submitted to the Tang court in the sixth month of 842.	JTS 18a:591 Z 246:7965
Wuzong	842.8	Alizhi 阿歷支	Li Sizhen 李思貞	Submitted to the Tang court.	JTS 18a:591 Z 246:7965
Wuzong	842.8	Xiwuchuo 習勿啜	Li Siyi 李思義	Submitted to the Tang court.	JTS 18a:591 Z 246:7965
Wuzong	842.8	Wuluosi 烏羅思	Li Sili 李思禮	Submitted to the Tang court.	JTS 18a:591 Z 246:7965

Yizong	869.10	Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心	Li Guochang 李國昌	Received the imperial surname due to suppressing *registered in the imperial lineage	JTS 19a:675 XTS 75b:3453 Z 251:8150	THY 65:1144
Xizong	875.6	Unknown	Li Maoxun 李茂勳	Originally from Uyghurs (Abusi's 阿布思 descendant). Submitted to the Tang court and had meritorious services.	XTS 212:5983 Z 252:8180	
Xizong	882	Tuoba Sijing 拓拔思敬	Li Sijing 李思敬	A descendant of Tangut. Contributed to suppressing Huang Chao's rebellion.	XWDS 40:436	
Xizong	886.7	Song Wentong 宋文通	Li Maozhen 李茂貞	Received the imperial surname due to contributing to pacifying Zhu Mei's 朱玫 rebellion.	JWDS 132:1737 XWDS 40:429 Z 256:8338	
Zhaozon g	889.11	Yang Fugong 楊復恭	Li Shunjie 李順節	Zhaozong was installed as emperor by Yang Fugong. Zhaozong bestowed the surname to Yang Fugong, also including his personal guards to the imperial guards.	JTS 184:4775 XTS 208:5890 Z 258:8391	
Zhaozon g	901.1	Sun Dezhao 孫德昭	Li Jizhao 李繼昭	Sun Dezhao freed and restored Emperor Zhaozong against Liu Jishu's 劉季述 coup in the twelfth month of 900.	JTS 20a:771 Z 262:8544	
Zhaozon g	901.1	Zhou Chenghui 周承誨	Li Jihui 李繼誨	Zhou Chenghui freed and restored Emperor Zhaozong against Liu Jishu's 劉季述 coup in the twelfth month of 900.	JTS 20a:771 Z 262:8545	
Zhaozon g	902.3	Zhang Yan 張儼	Li Yan 李儼	Zhang Jun's 張濬 son.	Z 263:8573	

Chapter 3

Table 3.1. Diplomatic Relations between Later Liang and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
906. 2	L1:2	Bian→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i> 聘)	The envoy brought a letter, money, clothing, and valuable things.
907. 4	L1:3	L→K	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i> 告)	Zhu Wen ascended as the emperor of Liang.
907. 4	C972:11419 H29:2-1 X.13	K→L	(H) (X) Meilao 梅老	(C) (H) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i> 貢) (X) To come (<i>lai</i> 來)	
907. 5	C972:11420 H29:2-1 Z266:8676	K→L	(C) (Z) Meilao	(C) To attend audience (<i>chao</i> 朝) and to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>) (Z) To come (<i>lai</i>) for friendly relations (<i>tonghao</i> 通好)	(C) It is said that starting from this point and up until 3 years from now, Khitan “offered up” good horses and tribute.
907. 5	Z266:8676	L→K	Gao Qi 高頎	to reciprocate (<i>bao</i> 報)	Zhu Wen sent Gao Qi to reciprocate Abaoji's sending of Meilao.
908. 2	C972:11420 H29:2-1 X2:15	K→L	(C) (H) Envoys	(C) (H) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) (H) Abaoji sent good horses as tribute.
908. 5	C972:11420 H29:2-1 Z266:8700 X2:15	K→L	(C)(Z) Envoys (H) Jichang 解里 (X) Envoys	(C) to provide (<i>jin</i> 進) (H) (Z) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) Abaoji's envoys provided (<i>jin</i>) goods. (H) Fine horses, golden flower embroidered reins and saddles, sabres etc. were given. (Z) The Khitan envoy and Gao Qi came together. Abaoji asked for (<i>qiu</i> 求) installation. They promised to attack Jin together.

909. 2	L1:4	L→K	Lang Gongyuan 郎公遠	To visit (<i>pin</i> 聘)	
909. 3	C976:11467	K→L	Cang Lu 昌鹿		Liang Taizu bestowed (<i>zi</i>) silver and silk to Cang Lu.
909. 8	H29:2-1	K→L	(H) Gelu 葛祿	(H) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	(H) Liang Taizu held a grand banquet and bestowed (<i>zi</i>) gold and silk to the envoys.
Leap Month	X2:18	L→K	(X) Envoys	(X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
911. 4	C972:11420 H29:2-1 L1:5 X2:19	K→L	(C) (H) Shiliu 實柳 Meilao 梅老 (L) (J) (X) Envoys	(C) (H) To attend audience and to provide tribute (<i>chaogong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(L) mentioned that the envoy was sent/has arrived on the <i>renshen</i> day.
911.11	L1:5	K→L	Envoys		
912. 10	C972: 11420 L1:6	K→L	(C) Shukuo 蜀括 Meilao 梅老 (L) Envoys	(C) To attend audience and to provide tribute (<i>chaogong</i>) (L) To offer for ritual (<i>zhiji</i> 致祭) of Zhu Wen	In the fourth month of the same year, Zhu Wen was killed by his son.
916. 4	L1:11	L→K	Lang Gongyuan	To celebrate (<i>he</i> 賀)	In the first month, Abaoji was installed as emperor.
917. 4	J9:130 X3:26	L→K	(J) (X) Liu Qu		(J) Liu Qu was appointed as Khitan Pacification Commissioner 契丹宣諭使.
918. 2	L1:12	L→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	(L) On the same day, envoys from Jin arrived to pay tribute (<i>gong</i>).
920. 9	C217:2609-1 J10:144 L2:16 X3:27	L→K	(C) (J) (L) (X) Lang Gongyuan 郎公遠	(L) To visit (<i>pin</i>)	(C) (J) (X) Lang Gongyuan was appointed as envoy.

923.4	I2:18	$L \rightarrow K$	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	On the same day, envoys from Wuyue arrived to pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)
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Table 3.2. Diplomatic Relations between Later Tang and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
907	CF980:11518 J137:1828 J26:360	J→K	(C) (J) Envoys	(C) (J) To have a friendly relation	Because Abaoji invaded Yunzhou, Li Keyong sent an envoy. At last, they had brotherly relationship.
908.1	J137:1828 L1:3	J→K K→J	(J) Envoys (L) Envoys	To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ui</i>) To condole and comfort (<i>dianwei</i> 弔慰)	Li Keyong died. After hearing Li Keyong died.
908.4	J137:1828 Z266:8694	J→K	(J) (Z) Envoys	(J) (Z) To bribe Abaoji to ask for cavalry (<i>lu</i> 賂)	Jin and Liang were fighting a battle. (J) Abaoji agreed to the dispatching of troops.
916.8	Z269:8805	K→J	(Z) Envoys	(Z) To request (<i>qiu</i>) money from Li Cunzhang 李存璋.	(Z) An envoy brought a letter in a wooden box (<i>mushu</i> 木書). The envoys were killed by Li Cunzhang.
918.2	L1:12	J→K		To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	On the same day, Jin State paid tribute with Wuyue, Parhae, etc.
923	C980:11518	K→T	(C) Envoys		
924.7	Z273:8923	K→T	(Z) Envoys	(Z) To request (<i>qiu</i>) Youzhou	(Z) In exchange of placing Lu Wenjin 盧文進
924.8	C980:11518	K→T			A letter was sent by Khitan State Uncle 國舅 Salayan 撒刺宴. It was reported from Youzhou.
925.5	C972:11421 H29:2-2	K→T	(C) Zhuailuyu 拽鹿盂 (H) Zhuailuyu and others	(C) (H) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
925.10	L2:21	T→K		To report (<i>gao</i>) that Tang fordid Liang	Abaoji sent an envoy to reciprocate their visit (<i>baopin</i>) 報聘

926.1	H29:2-2 J34:468 X5:50	K→T	(H) Meilao Xieli etc. (J) Envoys (X) Meilao Xieli 梅老鞋里	(H) (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(H) Khitan attacked Parhae. (H) (J) Khitan sent good horses as tribute.
926.2	I2:22	K→T	Envoys	To report (<i>hao</i>)	Khitan defeated Parhae.
926.7	C972:11421 J36:501 X6:56	K→T	(C) Meilaoli Shuguzhi 梅老里述骨之 (J) Envoys (X) Meilao Shugu 梅老述骨	(C) To give (<i>jin</i>) goods (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(J) The envoys of Khitan and Parhae arrived on the same day. (C) The envoy gave an eunuch, two horses, etc.
926.7	C980:11519 Q1:6 Z275:8989	T→K	(C) (Q) (Z) Yao Kun 姚坤	(C) (Q) (Z) To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ai</i>)	Zhuangzong died.
926.10	C980:11519 H29:3-1 J37:512 X6:57 Z275:8993	K→T	(C) Meigunei 沒骨餒 (H) Shegunci 設骨餒 (J) (X) Envoys (Z) Asimeigunei 阿思沒骨餒	(C) (H) (J) (X) (Z) To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ai</i>)	*Abaoji died. (X) Public affairs were postponed for three days. (Z) Abaoji died in the seventh month. The envoys were sent in the ninth month.
927.9	C972:11421 J38:528 X6:58 Z276:9009	K→T	(C) (J) Meilao meigu and others 梅老沒骨 (X) Meilao (Z) Envoys	(C) To offer up (<i>jinfeng</i> 進奉) (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>) (Z) To request a friendly relation	(Z) Emperor Mingzong sent an envoy to Liao as they requested.
927.9	Z276:9009	T→K	(Z) Envoys	(Z) To reciprocate (<i>hao</i> 報) Khitan's request	(Z) In the same month, Khitan sent an envoy to request a friendly relation.
927.10	C999:11725 J38:528	K→T	Envoys	(C) (J) To request (<i>qiu</i>) a tomb stone for Abaoji's stele	(C) (J) Taizong sent envoys with a letter.

927.11	H29:3-2 J38:530 X.58	K→T	(C) (H) (J) Meilao, etc. (X) Meilao	(J) To beg (<i>qi</i> 乞) (H) To pay tribute (<i>chaogong</i> 朝貢) (X) To come (<i>lai</i> 來)	(H) Mingzong granted (<i>zi</i>) goods to Khitan ruler and his mother. (H) (J) The envoys came to have friendly relations.
927.12	J38:530	T→K	An Niande 安念德	(J) To grant (<i>zi</i>) gifts to Khitan ruler and his mother	To Taizong: silk, silver, dishes, etc. To Empress Dowager: embroidered covers and a hat string with marbles
928.1	C972:11421 J39:534	K→T	(C) Tuna Meilao 禿納梅老 (J) Turubei Meilao 禿納悲梅老	(C) To offer up (<i>jinfeng</i>) (J) To pay tribute (<i>gongxian</i>)	Empress Dowager Shulü sent envoys.
928.1	C972:11421 J39:534	T→K	(C) (J) Ben Tuoshan 奔托山	(J) To bestow (<i>zi</i>)	Tang Mingzong sent Ben Tuoshan to Empress Dowager Shulü with a State Letter (<i>guoxin</i> 國信).
928.4	C999:11725 J39:537 L3:29	K→T	(C) (J) Mingzong got a report from Youzhou 幽州	(C) (J) To request musical instruments (<i>qin</i>)	(L) In the tenth month of the same year, Tang dispatched envoys to send (<i>wei</i> 遺) jade pipe.
928. 8 (leap month)	C972:11421 J39:541 Z276:9023	K→T	(C) Meilaoji 梅老季 (J) Envoys (Z) Meilaojisu 梅老季素	(C) To pay tribute (<i>gongfeng</i> 貢奉) (J) To provide tribute (<i>gongxian</i>) (Z) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	(C) In the same month, envoys from Tibet and Uyghurs paid tribute. (Z) A few days ago, Tang captured Khitan generals.
928.9	L3:29	K→T	Envoys		Taizong sent envoys to Tang.
928.12	L3:29	T→K	Envoys	Liao Taizong hears that Tang sent envoys to visit (<i>pin</i>)	Taizong's officers asked him to be cautious about the frequentness of sending envoys from Tang.

929.4	C972:11422 J40:549 X6:60	K→T	(C) (X) Liaokuomeili 撩括梅里 (J) Nakuomeili 捺括 梅里	(X) To request (<i>qiu</i>) (C) (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	(J) (X) The envoys came to request the corps of Tunei 秃馁 and others who were executed in the second month, but eventually the envoys were killed.
931.4	L3:32	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	
931.8	C972:11422 X6:63	K→T	(C) (X) Xiegu'er 邪姑 兒	(C) To pay tribute (<i>chuagong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
931.?	H29:5-1	K→T	Envoys	To pay tribute (<i>chuagong</i>)	Empress Dowager Shulü sent envoys for her son Yelü Bei.
931.11	L3:33	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	
931.12	C980:11520	K→T	A report from Youzhou	To beg (<i>qi</i>) a friendly relation	From Youzhou it was reported that Khitan wanted to have a friendly relation.
932.1	L3:33	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	In the same month, Liao sent an envoy to Later Tang.
932.1	C972:11422 J43:587 X.64	K→T	(C) (X) Zhaigu 拽骨 (J) Envoys	(J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (C) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
932.3	C972:11423 H29:5 J43:589 X6:64	K→T	(C) 1st: Qi'abo 起阿 鉢 and others (C) (H) 2nd: Tiegeloqing 鐵葛羅 卿 (J) Envoys (X) Envoys	(C) 1st: To give (<i>jin</i>) (C) 2nd: To offer up (<i>xian</i>), (H) To provide (<i>jin</i>) To request release of Cela 釐刺 (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) 1st: The envoys and one hundred and one people gave one hundred horses and goods. (C) 2nd: and (H): The envoys offered up thirty horses.

932.4	J43:591 Z977:9067	K→T	(J) (Z) Recently sent envoys several times	(J) To request (<i>qiu</i>) (Z) To request (<i>qiu</i>) the release of military chiefs	(J) (Z) The envoys requested Gela 則刺 and Tiyin 惕隱. (J) (Z) Mingzong discussed it with officials and decided not to permit it. (in the third month in ZZTJ)
932.4	L3:33	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	The envoy conveyed Yelü Bei's letter.
932.5	C980:11520 H29:5-2 Z277:9072	K→T	(C) (Z) Dieluqing 迭羅卿 (H) Tiegeluqing 鐵葛羅卿	(C) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (C) (H) (Z) To request the release of military chiefs	(C) (H) (Z) Mingzong accepted their request partly, and returned Cegu Sheli 薊骨舍利. (Z) Dieluqing left with Cegu Sheli.
932.7	L3:34	T→K	Envoys	To give (<i>wei</i> 遺) an instrument	
932.7	L3:34	T→K	Envoys	To give seasonal fruit	The fruit was sent from Zhao Dejun.
932.7	H29:5-2	K→T	(H) Shulu 述祿	To provide (<i>jün</i>)	The envoy provided thirty horses.
932.9	C972:11423 J43:594	K→T	(C) Shuluqing 述祿卿 (J) Envoys	(C) (J) To provide (<i>jün</i>)	(C) They envoys provided forty horses. (J) The envoys who came from Youzhou 幽州 provided horses.
932.10	L3:34	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	
932.11	J43:596	T→K	Envoys	To bestow (<i>xi</i>) silverwares and embroidered silk	It was the reaction of the Later Tang court to the fact that the Liao emperor was producing weapons to attack a city.
933.?	C980:11521	K→T	Envoys		This year, Khitan Empress Dowager sent envoys continuously because of Yelü Bei.
933.3	L3:34	T→K	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>) withdrawing of troops against Tangut	In the first month, Liao dispatched an army to Tangut.

933.5	C972:11423 C980:11520 J44:604 X6:65	K→T	(C) () Envoys (C) (X) Shuguqing 述骨卿	(C-1) To pay tribute (<i>chaogong</i>) (C-2) To enter (<i>ru</i>) (J) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
933.10	I3:35	T→K	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	On the <i>xinbai</i> day
933.10	I3:35	K→T	Bala 拔刺		On the <i>jinei</i> day
933.11	I3:35	K→T	Envoys	To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ai</i>)	Empress Dowager died. Khitan let the envoys inform Yelü Bei of this as well as the Tang court.
934. 1	C972:11423 C980:11521 J45:615 X7:70	K→T	(C) (X) Dudu Meilayu 都督 沒辣于 (J) Envoys	(C) To offer up (<i>xian</i>) (J) To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
				(C) The envoys offered up four hundred horses, ten camels, and two thousand sheep.	
934. 1 (leap month)	I3:35	T→K	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>) the death of Mingzong.	According to (L), Taizong sent envoys immediately to attend the funeral, but there is no record in both (J) and (X).
934.6	I3:35	T→K	Envoys	To thank (<i>xie</i>) for condolences	Li Conghou sent the envoys.
936.8	C972:11423 C980:11521 J48:643 X7:74	K→T	(C) () (X) Meili 梅里	(J) To enter (<i>ru</i> 入) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>) (C) Liao sent envoys (<i>qianshi</i>)	
				Three months later, Later Jin was established, and Li Congke died in the leap month.	
936. ?	C980:11521	K→T	Yinzhe Meili 銀折梅里	(C) To enter (<i>ru</i>)	

Table 3.3. Diplomatic Relations between Later Jin and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
936.7	L3:38 Z280:9146	J→K	(Z) An agent (<i>jianshi</i> 間使) (L) Zhao Ying 趙瑩	To plea (<i>qiujiu</i> 求救) for military aid	Taizong accepted it.
937.2	C980:11521 X8:80	K→J	(C) (X) Crown Prince 皇太子 Jieli 解里	(C) To be granted an audience with the emperor (<i>xian</i> 見) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	Jieli is another name of Yelü Mada 耶律麻荅.
937.4	C980:11521	K→J	Li Keyu 李可與	To be granted an audience with the emperor (<i>xian</i> 見)	
937.3	L3:40	J→K	Envoys	To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	*On the <i>gengshen</i> 庚申 day
937.3	L3:40	K→J	Langjundeligu 郎君的烈古 Meilidielie 梅里迭烈		
937.3	L3:40	J→K	Envoys	To be granted an audience with the emperor (<i>xian</i> 見)	*On the <i>rennu</i> day, envoys from Jin and other states came to meet emperor.
937.4	J76:1003 X8:81	J→K	Zhao Ying		According to (J), Zhao Ying came back to Jin in the sixth month.
937.4	X8:81	K→J	Li Kexing 李可興	To come (<i>lai</i>)	
937.6	C972:11423 J76:1002 X8:81	K→J	Yilibi 夷離畢	(C) To provide (<i>jìn</i>) (J) To visit (<i>pìn</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) The envoy provided three hundred horses and goods (ginseng, fur etc.)
937.6	L3:41	J→K	Nie Yanzuo 聶延祚	To ask for (<i>qing</i>) an honorific name	To ask for the addition of an honorific name and the return of the territories of Youzhou and Jizhou 薊州, and to provide three hundred thousand rolls of silk as tribute. Liao Taizong did not permit this.

937.7	I3:41	J→K	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>) that Fan Yanguang 范延廣 rebelled.	Taizong immediately dispatched Yelü Niaoquli 耶律曷古里.
937.7	I3:41	K→J	Yelü Niaoquli	To discuss (<i>yí</i> 議) military strategy	In reaction to Fan Yanguang's rebellion.
937.8	I3:41	J→K	Envoys	To ask for (<i>qing</i>) the addition of an honorific name again.	Liao Taizong again did not permit this.
937.8	I3:41	J→K	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	On the same day, Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 and Li Bian of Southern Tang provided tribute to Liao.
937.8	I3:41	J→K	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys reported that Fan Yanguang had surrendered.
937.9	I3:41	K→J	Zhiligu 直里古		Zhiligu was dispatched to Jin and Southern Tang.
937.10	I3:41	J→K	Envoys	To celebrate (<i>he</i> 賀) Empress Dowager's birthday (<i>yongningjie</i> 永寧節)	Not only Jin, but envoys from Uyghur and Dunhuang came to celebrate the day.
937.11	I3:41	K→J	Envoys	To request (<i>qin</i>) a doctor	The doctor came in the twelfth month.
938.1	I4:43	J→L	Envoys	To celebrate (<i>he</i>) a New Year's Day	Not only Jin, but envoys from other states arrived to celebrate.
938.1	I4:43	L→J	Envoys		(Probably) to celebrate a new year in return for dispatching envoys.
938.2	H29:6-1	L→J	Jielisheli meilao 解里舍利梅老	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	
938.5	I4:44	J→L	Envoys	To ask for (<i>qing</i>) the addition of an honorific name again	Taizong finally permitted this.
938.7	I4:44	L→J	Envoys	To bestow (<i>ci</i>) horses	
938.7	I4:44	L→J	Hulidi 鶻離底		Taizong also sent envoys to Southern Tang.

938.7 (938.10)	C17:193 C980:11521 H29:6-1 I4:44 X8:83	L→J	(H) Envoys (L) Yelü Shulandielege 耶律述 蘭迭烈哥 Zhao Siwen 趙思溫	(C-1) (C-2) To install (<i>ce</i>) (H) (In the tenth month), the envoys submit (<i>shang</i>) the honorific name	(L) Liao installed Jin emperor as Glorious Valiant Bright Righteous Emperor 英武明義皇帝. This is recorded in the tenth month in (X) (H) (C-1), but in the eleventh month in (C-2).
	X8:83	L→J	Han Jia 韓頰	To offer up (<i>fung</i>) the honorific name	Taizong provided Shi Jingtang with an honorific name.
938.10	J77:1020 I4:44 X8:83	J→L	(J) (X) Ma Congbin 馬 從斌 (L) Envoys	(L) To appreciate (<i>xie</i>) for the installation ceremony.	(J) Ma Congbin became Envoy of Khitans 契丹國信使 on the <i>muqi</i> day. (L) The envoys arrived on the <i>reyjin</i> day.
938.10	C980:11521 X8:83	L→J	(C) (X) Meili 梅里	(C) To arrive (<i>dao</i> 到) at the palace (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	In (C), it was recorded on the eleventh month.
938.11	C980:11521 J77:1017 I4:44 X8:82	J→L	Feng Dao 馮道 Liu Xu 劉煦 Wei Xun 韋勳 Lu Chong 盧重	(L) To offer up (<i>shang</i>) the honorific name of emperor and empress.	According to (C) (J) and (X), the envoys received palace credentials in terms of protocol envoys in the eighth month. (L) In the eleventh month, they offered the honorific names to the emperor and empress dowager.
938.11	I4:44-45	L→J	Zhao Ying 趙瑩	To celebrate (<i>he</i>) the start of Huitong reign	Also, Zhao offered up (xian) maps and register document of the Sixteen Prefectures.
938.12	I4:45	L→J	Tong Kuo 同括 Abo 阿鉢 etc.		
939.1	I4:45	J→L	Ma Congbin 馬從斌 Liu Zhixin 劉知新	To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoys provided valuable silk as tribute.

939.1	I4:45	J→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	On the <i>binghen</i> day, the envoys showed appreciation for the exemption of taxes for four prefectures.
939.7	I4:46	J→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys gave a belt made of rhino's leather.
939.7 (leap month)	I4:46	L→J	Dilie 的烈	To bestow (<i>xi</i>)	Dilie was sent to bestow rewards for sending good horses.
939.8	I4:46	J→L	Envoys	To pay tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoys were sent to pay annual taxes.
939.9	C972:11424 J78:1032 X8:84	L→J	(C) (J) (X) Zhanmugu 粘木孤	(C) To offer up (<i>xian</i>) (J) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and give (<i>zhi</i> 致) (X) To come	(C) The envoy offered up cows, dogs, sheep, jerky, and horses. (J) The envoy brought cows and horses.
939.11	C980:11521 X8:84	L→J	(C) (X) Yaozhe 遙折	(C) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) The envoys were dispatched to the Jin court in order to visit (<i>pin</i>) Wuyue 吳越.
940.1	I4:47	L→J	Peiye 陪謁 Abo 阿鉢	To express (<i>zhi</i> 致)	The envoys were sent to express congratulations for a birthday.
940.1	J79:1037	J→L	Yang Yanxun		
940.3	I4:47	L→J	Envoys	To inform (<i>bao</i> 報)	Envoys were sent to inform the Jin court of Taizong's visit of the Southern Capital.
940.3	I4:47	J→L	Envoys	To have audience with (<i>jin</i> 覲) the emperor	On the same day, envoys from Southern Tang came to have an audience with Emperor.

940.4	C980:11521 L4:47 X8:84	L→J	(C) (X) Prince of Xinghua 興化王 (L) Envoys	(C) To come visit (<i>laipin</i>) (X) The Prince of Xinghua came (<i>lai</i>)	(L) Envoys were sent on the <i>renjin</i> day. (C) (X) Prince of Xinghua arrived on the <i>jiazi</i> day.
940.4	L4:47	J→L	Yang Duan 楊端 Wang Tiao 王眺 etc.	To inquire after (<i>wenqiu</i> 問起居) the emperor	It is ambiguous if these envoys provided (jin) tea and medicine, but in the same month, Jin envoys provided tea and medicine. Also in the same month, envoys from Jin celebrated Dragon Boat Festival.
940.5	L4:48	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys provided arrows and bows.
940.5	L4:48	L→J	Prince Tiande 天德 Diyonghe 邸用和		
940.6	L4:48	J→L	Envoys	To be granted an audience with the emperor (<i>xian</i> 見)	
940.7	L4:48	J→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>)	The envoys requested permission to practice the ritual ceremony in the Southern Suburb 南郊. Taizong permitted this.
940.9	L4:48	J→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoys provided horses as tribute.
940.10	C972:11424 C980:11251 J79:1043 X8:85	L→J	(C) (J) Sheli 舍利	(C) (J) To visit (<i>pin</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(C) (J) The envoy brought one hundred horses and other goods. *The record is also shown in the eleventh month in the book 980 of (C).
940.10	L4:49	J→L	Envoys	The envoy provided cloths as tribute (<i>gong</i>)	To ask for (<i>qing</i>) the practicing of the ritual ceremony at Southern Sacred Peak. Taizong permitted it.

940.12	L4:49	L→J	Envoys			
941.2	L4:49	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jīn</i>)	The envoys provided incense and medicine on the <i>jīnchen</i> day.	
941.2	L4:49	J→L	Yang Yanxun	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	Yang also reported the situation about An Chongrong's 安重榮 rebellion on the <i>jīnwei</i> day.	
941.3	L4:49	J→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xīe</i>) and provide (<i>jīn</i>)	The envoys showed appreciation for the permission to practice the ritual ceremony in the Southern Suburb and provided ten <i>yí</i> (鎰) of gold.	
941.4	L4:49	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jīn</i>)	The envoys provided cherries.	
941.4	C980:11251 X8:85	L→J	(C) (X) Shukuo 述括	(C) To come visit (<i>lǎipín</i>) (X) To come (<i>lái</i>)		
941.5	L4:50	L→J	Diela 牒嶺	To inform (<i>yū</i> 諭)	Diela informed Jin emperor that Tuyuhun rebels encroached into Jin territory.	
941.6	L4:50	J→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qīng</i>)	As several generals rebelled and fled to Shouzhou, Taizong sent Niaoguzhi to Shouzhou to besiege the city. The envoys requested the withdrawal of the command.	
941.7	L4:50	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jīn</i>)	The envoys provided crystal inkstone.	
941.8	L4:50	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jīn</i>)	They envoys provided bows made of rhino leather and bamboo-made arrows.	
941.9	J80:1053 X8:85	J→L	Yang Yanxun		*Unlike (J) and (X), (L) states that Yang came to the Liao court in February.	
941.11	L4:50	J→L	Envoys (?)	To report (<i>gào</i>)	Jin reported that An Chongrong's rebellion was suppressed.	
941.11	C980:11522	L→J	Envoys			

941.12	L4:50	J→L	Envoys		To report (<i>gao</i>)	An Congjin 安從進 had rebelled. Taizong issued an edict to suppress him.
941.12	L4:50	J→L	Wang Shengluan 王升鸞		To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
941.12	X8:86	L→J	Envoys		(X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
941.12	L4:50	J→L	Envoys		To report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys reported that An Zhongrong was defeated. Taizong let Yang Yanxun go back.
941.12	L4:50	J→L	Envoys		To beg (<i>qi</i>)	The envoys requested the withdrawal of the armed forces. Taizong let Shuogu 朔古 withdraw the military.
942.1	L4:51	J→L	Envoys		To offer up (<i>xian</i>) An Chongrong's head in the box as a gift	Taizong had wanted to subjugate An Chongrong by himself.
942.1	C980:11522 J80:1057 L4:51 X8:86	L→J	(C) (X) Dala 達刺 (J) Envoys (L) Envoys		(C) To come visit (<i>laipin</i>) (J) To visit (<i>pin</i>) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	According to (J), another group of envoys came to visit Jin in the first month.
942.1	L4:51	J→L	Envoys		To celebrate (<i>he</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to celebrate the defeat of Shouzhou.
942.1	L4:51	L→J	Yelü Huage 耶律化哥			To attend the birthday ceremony.
942.2	C972:11424 J80:1057	L→J	(C) Daqing 大卿 and thirty one people (J) Envoys		(J) To visit (<i>pin</i>) (C) To visit offer up (<i>pinxian</i>)	(C) They offered up horses and other goods.
942.2	L4:51	L→J	Envoys			To capture the rebels of Tuyuhun
942.3	J80:1058 L4:51	J→L	(L) Song Huiye 宋暉業 Zhang Yan 張言		(L) To inquire after (<i>wenqin</i>) the emperor	* In (J), Song Guangye 宋光鄴 and Zhang Yan.
942.3	C980:11522	L→J	Gao Mohan 高模翰		To come visit (<i>laipin</i>)	

942.4	I4:51	J→K	Envoys	To provide (<i>jin</i>)	Jin provided sheliu 射柳 and saddled horses as gifts.
942.5	H29:6-1	L→J	Langwu 郎五	To offer condolences (<i>zhidiao</i> 致吊) and offer up (<i>xian</i>)	(H) In the fourth month, Gaozu died and Shaodi was installed. *According to (J) and (L), Shi Jingtang died in the sixth month.
942.6	I4:51	J→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	It was Prince of Qi 齊王, Shi Zhonggui 石重貴, who sent the envoys.
942.6	C980:11522	L→J	Dalagan 達刺干	To come (<i>lai</i>)	
942.6	C980:11522	J→L	Zhang Yangao 張延杲		The envoy was sent to the Liao court.
942.6	I4:52	J→L	Envoys	To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ai</i>)	Shi Jingtang died on the <i>yichou</i> day. The envoys arrived on the <i>wuchen</i> day. (L) Public affairs were postponed for seven days.
942.6	X9:89	J→L	(X) Li Renkuo 李仁廓		
942.6	I4:52 X9:89	L→J	(J) (X) Meili 梅李 (L) Envoys	(L) To go (<i>wang</i> 往) to Jin	(L) Liao sent envoys to attend the ritual ceremony.

942.7	J81:1068 I4:52 X9:89	J→L	(L) (X) Liang Yan 梁言 Zhu Chongjie 朱崇節	To show appreciation for Liao's delegation for Shi Jingtang's death (<i>xie</i> 謝)	(L) At the moment, Taizong received a letter from Jin which Shi Zhonggui called himself “grandson” (<i>sun</i> 孫) instead of “servant” (<i>chen</i> 臣). (X) The envoys conveyed State Letter and goods. *These envoys were sent (on the <i>jimao</i> day of) the sixth month in (J).
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942.7	J88:1144 I4:52	L→J	Qiao Rong 喬榮	To rebuke (<i>rang</i> 讓)	Because Shi Chonggui did not call himself “servant” in the letter.
942.7	X9:90	L→J	A translator	(X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	Liao sent a translator to the Jin court.
942.7	I4:52	J→L	Envoys	To report about a situation of mourning (<i>gao'ui</i>)	Shi Jingtang's mother, Grand Empress Dowager, died.
942.8 (8.13)	J81:1071 X9:90	L→J	(J) Envoys (X) Langwu	(J) To comfort (<i>wei</i> 慰) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(J) The envoys brought twenty horses, silk, etc.
942.8 (8.22)	C980:11522 J81:1071 X9:90	L→J	(C) Twenty one people including Sheli 舍利 (J) Envoys (X) Zhang Jiusi 張九思	(J) To offer for ritual (<i>zhi</i> 致祭) and to comfort (<i>wei</i> 慰) (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(J) The envoy brought one thousand sheep, two horses, one thousand rolls of silk. The empress dowager of Liao sent her envoys for the consolation. They were treated in Chongde Hall 崇德殿.
942.8	I4:52	L→J	Xiao Baishi 蕭拜石	To condole (<i>diao</i> 吊)	Xiao was sent to Jin to attend the ritual ceremony.
942.9	I4:52	L→J	Envoys	To celebrate (he)	The envoys were sent to celebrate the installation of the new emperor, Shi Zhonggui.
942.10	X9:90	L→J	Sheli 舍利	To come (<i>lai</i>)	
942.10 (10.30)	J81:1073 H29:6-2 X9:91	L→J	(J) Envoys (H) Dajing and twenty-six people (X) Dajing	(J) To offer for ritual (<i>zhi</i> 致祭) (H) To visit (<i>pin</i>) to Gaozu's mausoleum (X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	(J) The envoys provided three horses and three pieces of clothing. *It is recorded in the eleventh month in (X).
942.11	X9:91	J→L	Dong Yin 董殷		

942.12	X9:91	L→J	Lingguji 令骨支	To come (<i>lai</i>)	*In the same month, another envoy (probably from Liao) named Yelisi 野里已 came.
942.12	L4:52	J→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	
943.1	J81:1074 X9:91	L→J	(X) Wuduao 烏多奧	To come (<i>lai</i>)	(J) In the same month, the Virtuous Concubine née Yi 德妃伊氏 of Zhuangzong of Later Tang was provided four horses as tribute (<i>gong</i>) from Liao envoy.
943.2	L4:52	J→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys brought the keepsake of the former emperor.
943.2	L4:52	J→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>)	The envoys requested to live in Bianzhou 汴州. Taizong permitted it.
943.3	J81:1076 X9:91	J→L	Meng Chenghui 孟承誨		
943.4	X9:91	J→L	Dong Yin		
943.5	L4:53	L→J	Envoys	To send (<i>zhi</i>)	The envoys were sent to congratulate for a birthday.
943.6	L4:53	J→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The Jin court paid gold as tribute.
943.7 (7.6)	C972:11424		(C) Qiao Rong Tong Hao 通郝	(C) To provide (<i>jin</i>)	(C) The envoys provided a horse.
943.7 (7.21)	X9:92	L→J	(X) Meili 梅里 etc.	(X) To come (<i>lai</i>)	
943.8	L4:53	J→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The Jin court paid gold as tribute again.
943.8	L4:53	J→L	Shi Yanxu 石延煦	To come (<i>lai</i>)	Shi Yanxu is the grandson of Shi Jingtang. Shi Zhonggui made him a foster son.
943.10	X9:92	L→J	Liu Yin 劉胤	To come (<i>lai</i>)	*Liu Yin is a translator.

943.11	X9:92	J→L	Dong Yin 董殷		
943.11	X9:92	L→J	Meili 梅里	To come (<i>lai</i>)	
943.12	J82:1084 X9:92	J→L	(J) (X) Bian Guangfan 邊光範 Guo Yanwei		(J) Although the envoys were sent to Liao, they were unable to fulfill their duty since the Liao military invaded the frontier on their way.
944.1	J82:1086 L4:53 Z283:9263	J→L	(J) Meng Shouzhong 孟守忠 (L) Envoys	(J) (L) (Z) To restore (<i>xiu</i> 修) the old friendly relation	(J) (Z) Meng, who was a translator, conveyed a letter to Liao. Taizong said it was not possible.
944.7	L4:54 J82:1094-95	J→L	(L) Zhang Hui 張暉	(L) To beg (<i>qi</i>) for peace	(J) In the eighth month, jin dispatched fifteen generals to defend themselves. (L) Zhang Hui asked for a friendly relation, but he was detained in Liao.
945.6	X72:895-96 Z284:9294	J→L	(X) (Z) Zhang Hui	(X) To visit (<i>pin</i>) to restore (<i>xin</i>) the friendly relation (Z) To apologize (<i>xieguo</i> 謝過)	(X) (Z) Zhang carried a tributary memorial. Taizong suggested jin to provide two provinces, but jin considered it as rejection of restoring the former friendly relation.
945.7	L4:56	J→L	Meng Shouzhong	To request (<i>qing</i>)	The envoys requested friendly relation. Taizong replied same as the last mail.

Table 3.4. Diplomatic Relations between Later Han and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
937.8	L3:41	Liu Zhiyuan (LZY) → L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	On the same day, Jin and Southern Tang provided tribute to the Khitan.
947.1	J99:1324 Q3:36 Z286:9335-36	LZY → L	Wang Jun 王峻	(J) (Q) (Z) To offer up (<i>gong</i>) tributary memorial (<i>biao</i>)	Wang Jun conveyed three different <i>biao</i> to Taizong. Taizong bestowed (<i>ci</i>) an edict with a wooden cane. Taizong called Liu Zhiyuan “Son”.
947.1	Z286:9336	LZY → L	Bai Wenke 白文珂	To offer up (<i>xian</i>)	Bai Wenke offered up unique silk and good horses.
950.12 or 951.1	Z290:9452	L → H	Enovys	To request (<i>qing</i>) a friendly relation	Liao Shizong 世宗 sent envoys to Han to request a friendly relation, but because Later Han was already destroyed that the envoys were guided to Daliang 大梁.

Table 3.5. Diplomatic Relationship between Later Zhou and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
951. 1 or 2	C980:11522				(L) Guo Wei sent Zhu Xian to report the foundation of Zhou.
	H29:9-1				
	J111:1468	Zh→L	(C) (H) (J) (L) (Z) Zhu Xian 朱憲	(H) To have a friendly relation (L) To report (<i>gao</i>) (Z) To visit to reciprocate (<i>huapin</i>)	(Z) Guo Wei gave (<i>zeng</i> 贈) them a golden bowl and jade belt.
	L5:65 X11:112 Z290:9452				*It is recorded in the second month in (C) and (J), but in the first month in (H) (L) and (Z).
951. 1 or 2	C980:11522				It was the response of Later Zhou's sending Zhu Xian. Zhou Taizu let an envoy visit (pin) again reciprocally.
	H29:9-1			(C) To celebrate (<i>he</i>) and to offer up (<i>xian</i>)	(L) The envoys offered good horses.
	J111:1468	L→Zh	(C) (H) (X) (Z) Niaoguzhi 裊骨支	(H) To offer up (<i>xian</i>) good horses (J) To offer up (<i>xian</i>) (L) To offer (<i>zhi</i>) (X) To celebrate (<i>he</i>)	(Z) Zhu Xian came back to Zhou with Niaoguzhi.
	L5:65 X11:112 Z290:9456		(J) (L) Envoys		*It is recorded in the second month in (C) (X) and (Z), but in the first month in (H) and (L).
951. 1 or 2	H29:9-1		(H) Tian Min 田敏		(H) (J) They were returned in the fourth month.
	J111:1472 Z290:9457	Zh→L	Jiang Guangsui 蔣光遂	To go visit (<i>wangpin</i> 往聘)	*It is recorded in the second month in (Z).
951. 2	L5:66	Zh→L	Yao Hanying 姚漢英 Hua Zhaoyin 華昭胤		(L) Because the envoys brought a letter (<i>shu</i>) with no manners, Yao was left in Liao.
951. 4	H29:9-1 J111:1472	L→Zh	(H) Shiliu 實六 (J) Nuogu 耨姑	(H) To offer up (<i>xian</i>)	The envoys offered up goods including blue jade, saddles, and horses.

It was the response of Liao's offering.
 (Z) Yao Hanying was left in Liao due
 to the alliance between Liao and
 Northern Han.
 * It is recorded in the fifth month in
 (C) () (X) and (Z), but the fourth
 month in (H).

951.5 C980:11522
 H29:9-1
 J111:1472
 Z290:9460
 Zh→L
 (H) () Hua Guangyi
 華光裔
 Yao Hanying
 (C) To bestow (*xi*)
 (H) To go and dispatch (*nangshi*)
 () (Z) To dispatch (*shi*)

951.5	C980:11522	L→Zh	Daqing 大卿	To enter (<i>ru</i>)	The Later Zhou court bestowed (<i>xi</i>) valuable goods to the envoys.
951.11	L6:69	Zh→L	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i>)	*Shizong was killed in the ninth month.
957.6	L6:74	Zh→L	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	On the same day, envoys from Southern Tang arrived to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).
957.8	L6:74	Zh→L	Envoys	To visit (<i>pin</i>)	

Chapter 4

Table 4.1.1. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Former Shu

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Liang)	912.6	Former Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	Wang Jian sent a reply to Taizu calling himself emperor.	S 36:11	Unchanged
Zhuangzong (Tang)	923 (?)	Former Shu	<i>gongwang</i>	Wang Yan sent a letter to Zhuangzong calling himself "king of Great Shu State"大蜀國王.	C 232:2764	Self-installation
Zhuangzong (Tang)	924.7	Former Shu	<i>jiedushi / huangdi</i>	(J) Wang Yan called himself "emperor of Great Shu".	J 32:438	Self-installation

Table 4.1.2. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Later Shu

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Mingzong (Tang)	933.2	Later Shu	<i>wang</i>	(H) (I) Mingzong installed military governor of Eastern and Western Sichuan, Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥, as “king of Shu.” (Z) Mingzong installed Meng Zhixiang as “military governor of Eastern and Western Sichuan” and “king of Shu.”	H 11:13-2 J 44:602 Z 278:9082	First Installation
Modi (Tang)	934. leap month	Later Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	(Z) Meng Zhixiang called himself emperor.	Z 278:9102	Self-installation
Modi (Tang)	934.7	Later Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	(I) Meng Zhixiang sent a letter to Modi calling himself “emperor of Shu.”	J 46:637 S 48:26	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	937.4	Later Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	(S) Gaozu sent envoys to the Later Shu court. Gaozu called Meng Chang 孟昶 emperor of Shu.	S 49:4	Recognized
Shizong (Zhou)	955.10	Later Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	(Z) Meng Chang sent a letter to Shizong calling himself “emperor of Shu.” Shizong did not reply.	Z 292:9531	Unchanged
Shizong (Zhou)	957.8	Later Shu	<i>huangdi</i>	(Z) Wang Chang asked the Later Zhou court for friendly relations, but Shizong refused.	J 117:1562 Z 293:9571	Unchanged

Table 4.2. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Chu

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Liang)	907.4	Chu	<i>wang (prince)</i>	Taizu installed military governor of Hunan, Ma Yin 馬殷, as “king of Chu.”	H 11:12-1 J 3:49	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	927.6	Chu	<i>guowang</i>	(I) (C) (S) Mingzong installed king of Chu 楚王, Ma Yin, as “king of Chu State” 楚國王. (H) Mingzong installed military governor of Hunan, Ma Yin as “king of Chu State.” (Z) In the fifth month, king of Chu sent envoys to provide tribute (gong). In return, Mingzong sent ten good horses and two beauties to the Chu court. In the sixth month, Mingzong installed himself as “king of the Chu State.” In the eighth month, Mingzong sent envoys to conduct the installation ceremony of king of Chu. * The installation was in 928 in CFYG.	J 38:525 C 129:1556 H 11:13-1 S 67:11-2 Z 275:9006-2008	Promoted to king of State
Mingzong (Tang)	930.12	Chu	<i>guowang</i>	(I) “king of Chu State 楚國王, Ma Yin, died.”	J 41:571	Unchanged
Mingzong (Tang)	930.12	Chu	<i>jiedushi</i>	(S) (Z) Wang Xisheng 馬希聲 was not installed as king of Chu, but as a military governor.	S 68:1 Z 277:9053	Demoted to military governor

Mingzong (Tang)	933.2	Chu	<i>jiedushi</i>	(Z) Mingzong installed Ma Xifan 馬希範 as military governor of Wu'an and Wuping.	Z 278:9082	First Installation
Mindi (Tang)	934.1	Chu	<i>wang</i>	(Z) Mindi installed military governor of Wu'an and Wuping, Ma Xifan, as king of Chu.	Z 278:9100	Promoted to king
Gaozu (Jin)	937.1	Chu	<i>wang</i>	(J) Gaozu bestowed feudal tenure to Ma Xifan, the military governor of Hunan and king of Chu.	J 76:996	Unchanged
Gaozu (Han)	947.7	Chu	<i>wang</i>	(S) (Z) Gaozu installed Ma Xiguang 馬希廣 as king of Chu.	S 69:2 Z 287:9368	First Installation
	950.12	Chu	<i>wang</i>	(Z) Ma Xi'e 馬希萼 declared himself as king of Chu.	Z 289:9446	Self-installation
Yuanzong (Southern Tang)	951.3	Chu	<i>wang</i>	Ma Xi'e was intalled as king of Chu by the Southern Tang court.	Z 290:9458	First Installation by Southern Tang

Table 4.3. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Jingnan

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Zhuangzong (Tang)	924.3	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	(C) (J) (H) Mingzong installed military governor of Jingnan, Gao Jixing 高季興, as king of Nanping 南平王. (S) Mingzong installed the king (Gao Jixing), as king of Nanping. (Z) Minzong installed Gao Jixing as king of Nanping.	C 129:1556 J 31:431 H 11:13-1 S 100:6-2 Z 273:8917	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	926.6	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/wang</i>	(J) Mingzong bestowed more offices to Gao Jixing, the king of Nanping.	J 36:500	Unchanged
Mingzong (Tang)	927.2	Jingnan		Mingzong removed Gao Jixing, king of Nanping's, offices and titles.	C 123:1472 J 38:520	Demoted
Ruidi (Wu)	928.3	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	Yang Pu, Ruidi 睿帝 of Wu, installed Gao Jixing as king of Qin 秦王.	Z 276:9020	First Installation by Wu
Ruidi (Wu)	928.12	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	Gao Jixing died. Ruidi of Wu installed Gao Conghui 高從誨 as military governor of Jingnan.	Z 276:9026	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	930.12	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	(C) (J) Mingzong bestowed a posthumous office to Gao Jixing, the king of Nanping.	J 41:572 C 178:2143	Posthumous Installation

Mindi (Tang)	934.1	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	(I) (S) Mindi installed the king (Gao Conghui) as king of Nanping. (C) (Z) Mindi installed military governor of Jingnan, Gao Conghui, as king of Nanping.	J 45:616 S 101:2-1 Z 278:9100	Reinstalled by Tang
Modi (Tang)	934.5	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	Modi installed military governor of Jingnan, Gao Conghui, as king of Nanping	H 11:13-2	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	937.1	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/wang</i>	(I) Gaozu bestowed feudal tenure to Gao Conghui, the military governor of Jingnan and king of Nanping.	J 76:996	Unchanged
Chudi (Jin)	942.7	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/wang</i>	(I) Chudi bestowed more offices to Gao Conghui, the military governor of Jingnan and the king of Nanping.	J 81:1070	Unchanged
Gaozu (Han)	947.11	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(I) The military governor of Jingnan, Gao Conghui, rebelled.	J 100: 1338	Demoted
Yindi (Han)	948.6	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(I) The military governor of Jingnan, Gao Conghui, submitted. In the 11th month, Gao died.	J 101:1348	Unchanged
Yindi (Han)	948.12	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(Z) Yindi made Gao Baorong 高保融 the military governor of Jingnan.	Z 288:9404	First Installation

Yindi (Han)	949.2	Jingnan	<i>wang</i>	(S) Yindi issued an edict to give a posthumous office to military governor and king of Nanping, Gao Conghui.	S 101:6-1	Posthumous Installation
Taizu (Zhou)	951.1	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(C) military governor of Jingnan, Gao Baorong, provided tribute. (H) (I) Taizu installed military governor of Jingnan, Gao Baorong, as prince of the Bohai Prefecture.	C 169:2042 H 11:15 J 110:1463	Reinstalled due to Name Change
Taizu (Zhou)	951.4	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(C) Gao Baorong paid tribute.	C 169:2042	Unchanged
Taizu (Zhou)	954.1	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/wang</i>	(H) Taizu promoted prince of Bohai Prefecture, Gao Baorong, as king of Nanping. (I) Taizu promoted the military governor of Jingnan, Gao Baorong, as king of Nanping. (C) (S) Taizu installed the king (Gao Baorong) as king of Nanping.	C 129:1557 H 11:15 J 113:1501 S 101:7-2	Reinstalled due to Name Change
Taizu (Zhou)	954.7	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/wang</i>	(I) Taizu bestowed an office to Gao Baorong, the military governor of Jingnayn and the king of Nanping.	J 114:1518	Unchanged
Shizong (Zhou)	956.2	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(C) The military governor of Jingnan, Gao Baorong, provided (<i>jin</i>) gifts to the Zhou court.	C 169:2044	Unchanged

Gongdi (Zhou)	959.8	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi/nang</i>	(J) Gongdi bestowed an office to Gao Baorong, the military governor of Jingnayn and the king of Nanping.	J 120:1593	Unchanged
Taizu (Song)	962.2	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(SS) The military governor of Jingnan, Gao Baoxu, provided <i>(jin)</i> gifts.	<i>Song Shi</i> (SS) 1:8	Recognized as military governor
Taizu (Song)	963.4	Jingnan	<i>jiedushi</i>	(SS) The military governor of Jingnan, Gao Jichong 高繼沖, provided <i>(jin)</i> gifts.	SS 1:14	Unchanged

Table 4.4.1. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Wu

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu/Zhaozong (Tang)*	908.7	Wu	<i>wang</i> (prince)	Li Yan 李儼, in place of Tang, installed Yang Longyan 楊隆演 as prince of Hongnong 弘農王.	Z 266:8702	First Installation
Taizu/Zhaozong (Tang)*	910.2	Wu	<i>wang</i> (prince)	Li Maozhen 李茂貞, in place of Zhaozong of Tang, installed Yang Longyan as “inherited prince of Wu” 嗣吳王.	Z 267:8720	Reinstalled due to Name Change
Taizu/Zhaozong (Tang)*	912.8	Wu	<i>wang</i> (prince)	Li Yan, in place of Zhaozong of Tang, installed Yang Longyan as prince of Wu 吳王.	Z 268:8762	Reinstalled due to Name Change
Modi (Liang)	919.4	Wu	<i>guowang</i>	Yang Longyan 楊隆演 installed himself as the king of Wu State.	X 61:756 Z 270:8843	Self-installation
Mingzong (Tang)	927.11	Wu	<i>huangdi</i>	(S) The king was installed as emperor. (X) Yang Pu 楊溥 was installed as emperor.	X 61:758 S 3:7	Self-installation

Table 4.4.2. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Southern Tang

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Gaozu (Jin)	937.10	Southern Tang	<i>huangdi</i>	(Z) Xu Gao 徐誥 was enthroned as emperor and changed the dynastic name to “Tang.”	Z 281:9182	Self-installation
Chudi (Jin)	943.3	Southern Tang	<i>huangdi</i>	(Z) Li Jing 李景 was installed as emperor. He revised the reign name to Baoda 保大.	Z 283:9247	Self-installation
Shizong (Zhou)	956.2	Southern Tang		Li Jing voluntarily asked to become a vassal of Later Zhou. He offered up a tributary memorial.	J 116:1542	Status Change
Shizong (Zhou)	958.3	Southern Tang	<i>guozhu</i>	Li Jing voluntarily became a vassal of Later Zhou. He offered up a tributary memorial. This time, Shizong called him “Lord of Jiangnan” in the letter.	C 167:2020-2 NIIJ 2:13-2 J 118:1569 S 16:22-1 X 72:776 Z 294:9580-9581	Unchanged
Shizong (Zhou)	958.5	Southern Tang	<i>guozhu</i>	Shizong officially removed Li Jing's designation as emperor.	C 167:2021-1 X 72:776	Unchanged

Table 4.5. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Min

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Liang)	909.4	Min	<i>wang</i> (prince)	(S) After Taizu of Liang defeated the Tang dynasty, he installed Wang Shenzhi 王審知 as “prince of Min.” (H) Taizu installed military governor of Fujian, Wang Shenzhi as “prince of Min.” (X) (Z) Taizu installed Wang Shenzhi as “prince of Min.”	S 94:9-2 S 95:6-1 C 196:2360 H 11:12-1 X 68:846 Z 267:8708	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	926.10	Min	<i>guowang</i>	(S) (Z) Wang Yanhan 王延翰 installed himself as “king of the Great Min State” 大閩國王.	S 91:1 Z 275:8993	Self-installation
Mingzong (Tang)	927	Min	<i>wang/huangdi</i>	(C) Wang Yanjun killed his brother, and became the Emperor of Great Min. (C) The king of Min, Wang Yanjun, presumptuously called himself emperor.	C 219:2629 C 223:2672	Self-installation
Mingzong (Tang)	928.7	Min	<i>wang</i>	(J) Mingzong installed Wang Yanjun as the king of Min. (C) Mingzong installed king of Min. (H) Mingzong installed military governor of Fujian as “king of Min.”	J 39:540 C 129:1556 H 11:13-1	First Installation by Tang

Mingzong (Tang)	932.6	Min	<i>huangdi</i>	(C) (Z) As Qian Liu dies, Wang Yanjun 王延鈞 asked Mingzong to install him as the king of Wuyue, but Mingzong did not reply. Finally, Wang Yanjun called himself emperor. (X) Wang Lin installed himself emperor.	C 209:2635 C 232:2763 X 68:848 Z 277:9073	Self-installation
Gaozu (Jin)	938.11	Min	<i>guowang</i>	(C) (J) (Z) Gaozu installed king of Min, Wang Chang 王昶, as “king of Min State” 閩國王. (S) “Jin installed the Emperor as the king of Min State.”	C 664:7947 J 77:1021 S 91:10-1 Z 281:9193	First Installation
Gaozu (Jin)	939.7	Min	<i>guowang</i>	(S) (Z) Wang Yanxi 王延曦 installed himself as “king of Min State.”	S 92:1-2 Z 282:9206	Self-installation
Gaozu (Jin)	939.10	Min	<i>wang</i>	(J) Wang Chang 王昶, the king of Min, provided tribute to the Jin court.	J 78:1032	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	940.11	Min	<i>guowang</i>	(J) (S) (Z) Gaozu installed Wang Yanxi as “king of Min State.” *The actual installation was conducted in 941.	J 79:1044 S 92:3-2 Z 282:9218	First Installation
Gaozu (Jin)	941.10	Min	<i>emperor</i>	(Z) Wang Yanxi declared himself as emperor.	Z 282:9229	Self-installation
Gaozu (Jin)	941.11	Min	<i>guowang</i>	(J) Gaozu sent envoys to install Wang Yanxi as “king of Min State.”	J 80:1054	Reinstallation by Jin

Gaozu (Jin)	941.7	Min	emperor	(Z) Wang Yanxi declared himself as “August of Great Min” 大閩皇.	Z 282:9226	Self-installation
Chudi (Jin)	942.12	Min	<i>wang</i>	(C) “The king of Fujian,” Wang Yanxi, provided gifts (<i>jim</i>).	C 169:2041	Recognized as king
Jingzong (Min)	942.3	Min	<i>wang</i>	(S) Jingzong of Min installed his son, Wang Yacheng 王亞澄 as “prince of Min” 閩王.	S 92:5-1	Self-installation and Succession
Chudi (Jin)	942.9	Min	<i>jiedushi</i>	(J) Wang Yanxi, Fujian military governor, received an honorable fief and the designation of Vassal of Merit.	J 81:1071	Recognized as military governor
Chudi (Jin)	944.12	Min	<i>wang/guowang</i>	(J) Wang Yanxi, the king of Min, was killed by Zhu Wenjin in the eight month. (J) (S) (Z) Zhu Wenjin was installed as “king of Min State.” (S) Zhu Wenjin called Min as fan. Then Chudi of Jin installed him as the king of the state.	J 83:1095 J 83:1097 S 92:9-2 S 98:8-2 Z 284:9277	Promoted by Jin
Chudi (Jin)	944.3	Min	<i>wang</i>	(S) Zhu Wenjin 朱文進 killed the king, and installed himself “king of Min.”	S 92:8-2	Self-installation

Table 4.6. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Southern Han

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Liang)	907.5	Before Southern Han	<i>wang</i> (prince)	Taizu installed Li Yin 劉隱 as prince of Dapeng 大彭.	Z 266:8680	Installation
Taizu (Liang)	909.4	Before Southern Han	<i>wang</i> (prince)	(Z) Taizu installed Liu Yin as “prince of Nanping.”	Z 267:8708	Reinstallation
Taizu (Liang)	910.2	Before Southern Han	<i>wang</i> (prince)	(S) Taizu installed Liu Yin as “prince of Nanhai.”	S 58:3	Reinstallation
Zhuangzong (Tang)	925.2	Southern Han	<i>guowang</i>	(C) (I) (S) Liu Yan 劉嚴 sent a letter to Zhuangzong calling himself “king of the Great Han State” 大漢國王. *According to <i>SGCQ</i> , the letter was sent in the first month in 925.	C 232:2764 J 32:446 S 58:8	Self-installation

Table 4.7. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Wuyue

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Liang)	907.4	Wuyue	<i>wang</i> (prince)	Taizu installed military governor of Liangjie, Qian Liu, as “prince of Wuyue.”	H 11:12-1	First Installation
Modi (Liang)	923.2	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	Liang Modi installed Qian Liu as the king of Wuyue State.	Z 272:8880 S 78:14	Promoted to king of State
Zhuangzong (Tang)	924.10	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	(J) Zhuangzong reinstalled Qian Liu as king of Wuyue State. (Z) Qian Liu asked Zhuangzong to install him as king of Wuyue State. Zhuangzong accepted it.	J 32:442 Z 273:8926	Unchanged
Zhuangzong (Tang)	925.8	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	(C) Zhuangzong installed the king of Wuyue as “king of Wuyue State.” (Z) Zhuangzong sent envoys to Wuyue to give the king of Wuyue State a Jade Investiture Book, Golden Seal, and Red Robe.	C 129:1556-1 Z 273:8936	Unchanged
Mingzong (Tang)	926.5	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	The king of Wuyue State sent gifts to the Later Tang court.	J 36:498	Unchanged

Mingzong (Tang)	929.9	Wuyue	<i>taishi</i>	(J) Mingzong removed king of the Wuyue State's offices and made him grand preceptor (<i>taishi</i> 太師). (Z) Mingzong demoted the king of the Wuyue State to grand preceptor because of his arrogant attitude. Qian Liu's son, Qian Chuanguan 錢傳瓘, tried to change Mingzong's mind, but failed.	J 40:554 Z 276:9032-9033	Demoted to Grand Preceptor
Mingzong (Tang)	931.3	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	(J) (Z) Mingzong restored Qian Liu's position to “king of Wuyue State.”	J 42:577 Z 277:9058	Reinstalled as king of State
Mingzong (Tang)	932.7	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	(J) “The king of Wuyue State 吳越國王, Qian Liu, died.”	J 43:592	Unchanged
Mingzong (Tang)	933.7	Wuyue	<i>nang</i>	(H) Mingzong installed military governor of Liangjie, Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘, as “king of Wu.”	H 11:13-2 S 79:5	First Installation
Mindi (Tang)	934.1	Wuyue	<i>nang</i>	(Z) Mindi installed military governor of Zhenhui and Zhengdong, Qian Yuanguan, as king of Wuyue.	Z 278:9100	Reinstalled due to Name Change
Gaozu (Jin)	937.11	Wuyue	<i>guowang</i>	(J) (Z) Gaozu (Shi Jingtang) installed king of Wuyue 吳越王, Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘, as “king of Wuyue State.”	J 76:1009 Z 281:9184	Promoted to king of State

Gaozu (Jin)	938.10	Wuyue	<i>jiedushi/guonang</i>	(C) Qian Yuanguan sent gifts to the Jin court for giving offices to him and installing him as the king of Wuyue State.	C 169:2039	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	941.11	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Gaozu sent envoys to present offices to Qian Yuanguan, the king of Wuyue State.	J 80:1054	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	941.12	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Qian Yuanguan, the king of Wuyue State, died. (Z) Qian Hongzuo 錢弘佐 was installed as “king of Wuyue State.”	J 80:1054 Z 282:9232	First Installation
Chudi (Jin)	942.7	Wuyue	<i>jiedushi/guonang</i>	(C) Liangjiang military governor, Qian Hongzuo, gave gifts (<i>jia</i>) for installing him as the king of Wuyue State. Qian Hongzuo also provided tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 169:2041	Unchanged
Chudi (Jin)	942.9	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Qian Hongzuo, king of Wuyue State received an honorable fief and designation of “vassal of merit” (<i>gongchen</i> 功臣).	J 81:1071	Unchanged
Chudi (Jin)	943.11	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(C) (I) Chudi gave a posthumous office to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Yuanguan.	C 596:7148 J 82:1083	Unchanged
Chudi (Jin)	944.10	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Chudi bestowed more offices to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongzuo.	J 83:1096	Unchanged

Chudi (Jin)	946.11	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) The king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongzuo, retained previous positions.	J 85:1122	Unchanged
Chudi (Jin)	946.7	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Chudi bestowed more offices to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongzuo.	J 84:1116	Unchanged
Gaozu (Han)	947.8	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) The king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongzuo, died.	J 100:1337	Unchanged
Gaozu (Han)	947.8	Wuyue	<i>nang</i>	(Z) Gaozu installed Qian Hongzong 錢弘宗 as “king of Wuyue” (<i>nang</i>).	Z 287:9375	First Installation
Yindi (Han)	948.4	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Yindi bestowed more offices to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongzong.	J 101:1347	Unchanged
Yindi (Han)	948.8	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Yindi bestowed more offices to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongchu 錢弘俶. (Z) Qian Hongchu was installed as “king of Wuyue State” and bestowed other offices.	J 101:1350 Z 288:9396	First Installation
Yindi (Han)	949.11	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Yindi made the mother of the king of Wuyue State as Favorable Virtuously Great Lady 順德太夫人.	J 102:1632	Unchanged
Taizu (Zhou)	951.9	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Taizu bestowed an additional office to the king of Wuyue State, Qian Hongchu.	J 111:1475	Unchanged

Taizu (Zhou)	954.7	Wuyue	<i>wang/guonang</i>	(I) Taizu bestowed an additional office to the king of Wuyue State (<i>guonang</i>), Qian Hongchu. (Z) Taizu bestowed an additional office to the king of Wuyue (<i>wang</i>), Qian Hongchu.	J 114:1518 Z 292:9517	Unchanged
Gongdi (Zhou)	959.6	Wuyue	<i>guonang</i>	(I) Gongdi bestowed honorable fief and bestowed the designation of “Vassal of Merit” (<i>gongchen</i>) to the king of Wuyue State.	J 120:1593	Unchanged

Table 4.8. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and Northern Han

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Taizu (Zhou)	951.1	Northern Han	<i>huangdi</i>	(C) (I) Liu Chong 劉崇 falsely claimed (<i>jianhao</i> 僭號) himself as emperor. (Z) Liu Chong installed himself as emperor.	C 66:741 C 209:2635 J 135:1811 Z 290:9453	Self-installation
Taizu (Zhou)	951.6	Northern Han	<i>huangdi</i>	Liao Shizong installed Liu Chong as emperor. * In <i>QDGZ</i> the installation was held in the fourth month.	L 5:66 Q 4:47 X 70:863 Z 290:9462	First Installation by Liao
Taizu (Zhou)	954.10	Northern Han	<i>huangdi</i>	(S) (Z) Liao Shizong sent an envoy to install Liu Chengjun 劉承鈞 as emperor of Northern Han.	S 105:1 Z 272:9520	First Installation
Taizu (Song)	969.2	Northern Han	<i>huangdi</i>	(1.) Liao Muzong sent envoys to install Liu Jiyuan 劉繼元 as emperor. * According to <i>Song shi</i> , Liu Jiyuan became emperor in the ninth month of 968.	L 7:87 SS 2:27	First Installation

Table 4.9. Diplomatic Relations between the Five Dynasties and the Four Barbarians

Emperor (Dynasty)	Date (Y.M)	State	Status	Details	Source	Status Change
Koryŏ						
Mingzong (Tang)	929.8	Koryŏ	<i>gunwang</i>	The king of Koryŏ State, Wang Kŏn, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11422	Recognized
Mingzong (Tang)	932.6	Koryŏ	<i>gunwang</i>	(C) (I) Mingzong installed Wang Kŏn as “king of Koryŏ State.” *It is recorded in the fifth month in <i>CFYG</i> . The actual installation was in the seventh month.	C 965:11355 J 43:592	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	932.7	Koryŏ	<i>gunwang</i>	Mingzong installed Wang Kŏn’s wife as Lady of Hedong Commandery 河東郡夫人.	C 976:11469	Unchanged
Modi (Tang)	935.10	Koryŏ	<i>gunwang</i>	(C) The king of Koryŏ State, Wang Kŏn, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11423	Unchanged
Gaozu (Jin)	941.6	Koryŏ	<i>gunwang</i>	(C) (I) Gaozu bestowed offices to Wang Kŏn, the king of Koryŏ State.	C 965:11356 J 79:1048	Unchanged

Chudi (Jin)	945.11	Koryŏ	<i>guonang</i>	(C) (J) Chudi installed Wang Mu 王武 as “king of Koryŏ State.” The actual installation was conducted in the twelfth month. *It is recorded in the twelfth month in CFYG.	C 965:11356 J 84:1111	First Installation
Taizu (Zhou)	952.2	Koryŏ	<i>wang/guonang</i>	(C) Wang So was installed as “king of Koryŏ” (<i>wang</i>). (J) Taizu installed Wang So 王昭 as “king of Koryŏ State” (<i>guowang</i>).	C 965:11356 J 112:1480	First Installation
Shizong (Zhou)	955.11	Koryŏ	<i>guonang</i>	(C) (J) Shizong bestowed offices to the king of Koryŏ State, Wang So.	C 965:11356 J 115:1535	Unchanged
Shizong (Zhou)	959.1	Koryŏ	<i>guonang</i>	(C) (J) The king of Koryŏ State, Wang So, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11425 J 119:1579	Unchanged
Gongdi (Zhou)	959.6 (?)	Koryŏ	<i>guonang</i>	(C) Gongdi bestowed honorable fief to the king of Koryŏ State, Wang So.	C 965:11357	Unchanged
<u>Khotan</u>						
Gaozu (Jin)	938.9	Khotan	<i>guonang</i>	(C) The king of Khotan State, Li Shengwen 李聖文, sent envoys to give gifts (<i>jün</i>). (J) The king of Khotan State, Yang Renmi 楊仁美, sent envoys to pay tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11424 J 77:1017	Recognized

Gaozu (Jin)	938.10	Khotan	<i>guonang</i>	(C) (f) Gaozu installed the king of Khotan State, Li Shengtian 李聖天, as “king of Greatly Revered Khotan State.”	C 965:11355 J 77:1021	First Installation
<u>Shilla</u>						
Zhuangzong (Tang)	923.11	Shilla	<i>wang/guonang</i>	(C) The king of Shilla State (<i>guonang</i>) sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>). (f) (H) The king of Shilla (<i>wang</i>) sent envoys to provide tribute. (X) The king of Shilla State (<i>guonang</i>) sent envoys.	C 972:11420 J 30:420 H 30:10-1 X 5:46	Recognized
Zhuangzong (Tang)	924.1	Shilla	<i>wang/guonang</i>	(C) (f) The king of Shilla (<i>wang</i>) sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>). (X) The king of Shilla State (<i>guonang</i>) sent envoys.	C 972:11420 J 31:426 X 5:46 X 74:920	Unchanged
Taizu (Wuyue)	925	Shilla	<i>wang</i>	(SG) (X) Qian Liu of Wuyue sent envoys to install king of Shilla and Parhae.	SG 78:17-1 X 67:840	First Installation
Mingzong (Tang)	932.4	Shilla	<i>wang/guonang</i> (deputy)	(C) The deputy king of Shilla State 新羅國權知本國王, Kim Pu 金溥, paid tribute (<i>gong</i>). (f) King of Shilla, Kim Pu, paid tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11423 J 43:590 X 6:64	Unchanged

Parhae

Taizu (Liang)	912.5	Parhae	<i>wang</i>	The king of Parhae State, Tae Insŏn sent his son, Tae Gwangch'an 大光贊 to provide gifts (<i>jin</i>).	C 972:11420	Recognized
Zhuangzong (Tang)	924.5	Parhae	<i>guwang</i>	(C) (f) The king of Parhae State, Tae Insŏn, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11420 J 32:436	Unchanged
Mingzong (Tang)	926.4	Parhae	<i>guwang</i>	(C) (f) The king of Parhae State, Tae Insŏn, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11421 J 36:496	Unchanged
Zhuangzong (Tang)	925.2	Parhae	<i>guwang</i>	The king of Parhae State, Tae Insŏn, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11421	Unchanged

Champa

Shizong (Zhou)	958.9	Champa	<i>guwang</i>	(C) (f) The king of Champa State, Shili Yindeman 釋利因德漫, sent envoys to provide tribute (<i>gong</i>).	C 972:11425 J 118:1575	Recognized
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Chapter 5

Table 5.1. Diplomatic Relations between Southern Tang and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
937.5	Z281:9173	ST→L	Envoys	To have a friendly relationship (<i>xin hao</i> 脡好)	Xu Zhigao sent envoys with beautiful ladies and valuable gifts.
937.8	L3:41	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	On the same day, Taizong received tributes from Liu Zhiyuan of Taiyuan.
937.9	L3:41	L→ST	Zhiligu 直里古		Zhiligu was also sent to the Jin court.
938	N(L)18:4-1 S15:8-1	L→ST	Envoys from Taizong and king of Dongdan	(N) (S) To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	Taizong and his younger brother paid sheep and horses as tributes.
938.6	N(L)18:4-1	L→ST	Meilinalugu 梅里捺盧古 et al.	To offer up (<i>jeng</i>) and give tribute (<i>z-hyong</i>)	Khitans and Dongdan sent envoys to the Southern Tang court respectively. They offered up a letter and provided tributes.
938.6	L4:44	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
938.8	L4:44 N(L)1:6-1 S15:8-1	L→ST	(L) Meilialaogu 梅里了古 (N) Meililugu 梅里盧古	(N) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>)	(N) The envoy arrived in the seventh month of 938.
938.8	Z281:9189	L→ST	Envoys		Khitans sent envoys to Southern Tang. On their way back to Liao, the envoys were killed in the Jin territory.
939.1	L4:45	L→ST	Envoys	To report (<i>hao</i> 報)	Because Taizong received tributary memorial from the Jin court, Taizong sent envoys to Southern Tang and Koryŏ courts respectively.

939.2	N(L)1:7-1 S15:10-1	L→ST	Helu 曷魯	To come (<i>lai</i>)	The envoy served the emperor (Li Bian) following the décorum for older brother (以兄禮事帝)
939.5	L4:46	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
940.3	L4:47	ST→L	Envoys	To have audience with (<i>jin</i> 覲) the emperor	On the same day, Taizong received envoys from the Jin court.
940.4	L4:47	ST→L	Envoys	To provide (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys provided white tortoise as a gift.
940.8	L4:48	L→ST	Envoys		The Liao court sent envoys to the Southern Tang court.
940.8	L4:48	ST→L	Envoys	To seek (<i>qiu</i> 求)	The envoys came to the Liao court to seek blue woolen tent.
940.9	N(L)1:8-2 S15:13-2	L→ST	(N) (S) Meililüegumili 梅里掠姑米里	(N) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and offer up (<i>xian</i>)	The envoys offered up fur clothes made of fox axillary leather.
940.10	L4:49	L→ST	Lüegu 略姑		On the same day, Taizong sent Keilang to the Wuyue court.
940.11	L4:49	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>jeng</i> 奉)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter and talked about the secret plans to (attack) Jin.
940	N(L)18:5-1 S15:14-2	L→ST	Envoys	(N) (S) To offer up (<i>xian</i>)	Taizong sent envoys to offer up four hundred horses.
941.1	L4:49	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoys came to provide tribute.
941.5	N(L)1:9-2	L→ST	Envoys	To come (<i>lai</i>)	The envoys came.
941.7	L4:50	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>jeng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
941.8	L4:50	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>jeng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
941.12	L4:50	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>jeng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
942.6	N(L)1:10-1 S15:16-2	L→ST	lüegumili 掠姑米里	(N) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and offer up (<i>xian</i>)	The envoy offered up five horses.

943.1	N(1)1:10-2 S15:17-1	L→ST	Daluogan 達羅干 and twenty-seven people	(N) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and offer up (<i>xian</i>)	The envoys offered up three hundred horses and thirty-five thousand sheep.
943.3	L4:53	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>eng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
943.6	N(1)15:5-1 S23:6-2 S16:3-2	ST→L	Gongsheng Rong 公乘鎔	To maintain (<i>ji</i> 繼) relationship	Gongsheng Rong was sent to the Liao court (via sea route) to maintain friendly relations.
947.1	N(1)2:4-2 N(M)3:15 S16:6-2 X62:771	L→ST	Envoys	(NL) (S) To report (<i>gao</i>) and ask for (<i>qing</i>) (NM) To report (<i>gao</i>) (X) To visit (<i>pin</i>)	After Taizong conquered Later Jin, he sent (envoys) to tell his victory and asked for covenant. But, the emperor (Li Jing) refused. (NM) Khitan suggested to Li Bian that he become the ruler of Central Plain (X) Khitan sent envoys.
947.1	N(1)2:4-2 N(M)3:15 S16:7-1 X62:771 Z286: 9338	ST→L	(NL) (S) Zhang Yi 張易 (NM) (X) Jia Tan 賈潭 (Z) Envoys	(NL) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and ask for (<i>qing</i>) (NM) (X) To visit in return (<i>baopin</i> 報聘) (Z) To celebrate (he) and ask for (<i>qing</i>)	(N) (S) The envoy asked to visit Chang'an to re-offer up (<i>xiaofeng</i> 脩奉) to mausoleums, but Taizong refused. (NM) (X) Jia Tan visited the Liao court in return for their last visit. (Z) Li Jing sent envoys to Taizong to celebrate his victory. They also asked for restoring the mausoleums, but it was rejected.
948.4	L5:64	ST→L	Li Lang 李朗 Wang Zuo 王祚	To comfort (<i>wei</i> 慰), celebrate (<i>he</i>) and offer up (<i>eng</i>)	The two envoys consoled the death of Taizong, celebrated the accession of Shizong, and offered up a sealed letter to discuss about attacking Later Han.
950.3	L5:65	ST→L	Zhao Yansi 趙延嗣 Zhang Fu 張福	To celebrate (<i>he</i>)	The two envoys celebrated the defeat of the south.
951.6	L5:66	ST→L	Jiang Hong 蔣洪	To beg (<i>qi</i>)	The envoy came to beg for military aid.

951.11	L6:69	ST→L	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i> 弔)	Because Shizong died in the ninth month, envoys (not only from Southern Tang, but also from Northern Han and Zhou) came to the Liao court to offer their condolences.
952.1	L6:70	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>feng</i>) and provide (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter and provided ten-thousand armors made of rhinoceros.
952.3	L6:70	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>feng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
952.3	L6:70	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>qong</i>)	In the same month, it was the second time sending envoys.
952.5	L6:70	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>qong</i>)	
953.3	L6:71	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>qong</i>)	There was a letter for the Northern Han court. Muzong let the letter be delivered to Han.
954.7	N(l)2:9-2 N(m)3:19 S16:14-2 Z294:9606	L→ST	Envoys including the Father-in-law of Muzong of Liao	(NL) (NM) (S) To visit (<i>pin</i>)	(NL) (S) (Z) During the banquet at night in Qingfeng Station, the envoy was killed. * In ZZTJ, it is recorded in 959.
955.10	L6:73	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>qong</i>)	the <i>gengyin</i> day
955.10	Z292:9532	ST→L	Envoys		The Southern Tang court sent envoys to Liao to plan the restoration of Middle kingdom.

956.2	N(1)2:11-1	ST→L	(NIM) (X) (Z) a person (<i>ren</i>) an agent	(NL) (NIM) (S) To seek aid (<i>qiuyan</i> 求援) (X) (Z) To plea (<i>qiuju</i>)	As Zhou attacked Southern Tang, Governor of Taizhou 泰州刺史 abandoned the city. Li Jing sent agents to ask for help, but the agent was captured by Zhou. (NIM) (X) It was on the eleventh month of 955.
	N(M)3:21				
	S16:18-1				
	X62:774 Z292:9541				
956.2	S16:18-1	ST→L	Chen Chuyao 陳處堯	(S) (Z) To beg (<i>qi</i>)	(S) (Z) Li Jing sent the envoy to ask for military aid from Liao. (Z) Liao was unable to provide them their military.
	Z293:9562				
956.12	S16:20-1	ST→L	Chen Chuyao	To beg (<i>qi</i>)	Li Jing sent the envoy to ask for military aid from Liao.
957.2	L6:74	ST→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>jeng</i>)	The envoys offered up a sealed letter.
957.6	L6:74	ST→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	

Table 5.2. Diplomatic Relations between Northern Han and the Khitans

Date (Y.M)	Source	Relation	Envoy	Rhetoric/Purpose	Notes
951.1	S104:2-2 Q4:47 Z290:9455	L→NH	Pan Yunian 潘聿然	To give (<i>wei</i>)	Fan was sent to convey a letter to Liu Chengjun 劉承鈞. *It is recorded in the second month in (Q).
951.3	S104:3-1 X70:864 Z290:9459	NH→L	(S) (X) Li Chan (Z) Li Bian 李辯	(S) (Z) To beg (<i>qi</i>) for aid (X) sent the envoy to Khitan	Li Chan went to the Liao court for military aid. (Z) Shizong let Zhuaila Meili 拽刺梅里 requite (<i>bao</i> 報) his visit.
951.4	Q4:47 Z290:9460	L→NH	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Shizong let the Northern Han court know that Zhou sent Tian Min 田敏 and agreed to receive the annual taxes.
951.4	Q4:47 X70:864 Z290:9460	NH→L	Zheng Gong 鄭珙	To bribe for appreciation (<i>luxie</i> 賂謝) and request (<i>qing</i>) (X) sent a letter (<i>zhisu</i> 致書)	Liu Chong set the relations between the two as “nephew” and “uncle,” and asked for his installation.
951.6	L5:66	H→L	Envoys	To beg (<i>qi</i>) for aid and plead (<i>qiu</i>)	Liu Chong called himself nephew, asked for military aid against Later Zhou, and pleaded for his installation.
951.6	L5:66 X70:864 Z290:9462	L→H	prince of Yan, Yelü Shuya 耶魯述剌 Diela 蝶螭 Gao Xun 高勳	To install (<i>ce</i> 冊)	Liu Chong was installed as emperor and his wife as empress.
951.7	Q4:47 Z290:9462	H→L	Wei Rong 衛融	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>) and to request (<i>qing</i>)	As Shizong admitted the installation, Liu Chong sent envoys to show appreciation for it and request military aid.
951.9	L6:69	L→H	Liu Chengxun 劉承訓	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Liu was dispatched to report the death of Shizong.

951.9	Q5:50 X70:865 Z290:9462	H→L	(X) (Z) Wang Dezhong 王得中	(X) To visit (<i>pin</i>) and plead (<i>qiu</i>) (Q) (Z) To celebrate (he) and request (<i>qing</i>)	Wang was sent to celebrate the installation of Yelü Shulü 耶律述律 and ask for military aid to attack Zhou.
951.11	L6:69	H→L	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i>)	*Shizong was killed in the ninth month.
951.12	L6:69	H→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>xian</i>)	Northern Han offered up bows and arrows, and saddled horses as gifts.
952.6	L6:70	H→L	Envoys	To plead (<i>qiu</i>) for aid	Because Zhou invaded Han, they dispatched envoys for military aid. Muzong sent Gao Mohan.
952.1	L6:70	H→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys provided wine.
953.1 (leap month)	L6:71	H→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	Liao sent Gao Mohan to defeat the Zhou military.
953.3	L6:71	H→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys provided leather, clothes, and horses.
953.5	L6:71	H→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>)	As the stele of the Jin emperor was damaged, envoys were sent to request a sculpting of a new one. Muzong admitted it.
953.9	L6:72	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoy provided medicine as tribute.
953.11	L6:72	H→L	Envoys	To attend (<i>hui</i> 會)	Empress Dowager was buried. The envoys came to attend the ceremony.
954.1	Z291:9501 X70:865	H→L	Envoys	(X) To beg (<i>qi</i>) (Z) To request (<i>qing</i>)	They requested military aid from Liao to attack Later Zhou. In the second month, Liao sent Yang Gun 楊袞.
954.2	L6:72	H→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys provided tea-medicine.
954.3	Z291:9508	H→L	Wang Dezhong	To plead (<i>qiuju</i>)	Wang Dezhong requested military aid from Liao to attack Later Zhou.

954.7	L6:72	H→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>)	The envoy requested the return of Han commoners who were mistakenly plundered by Liao. Muzong issued the edict to return them.
954.9	L6:72	H→L	Envoys	to report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to report that Zhou invaded Han.
954.12	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
955.2	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To request (<i>qing</i>)	The envoys requested the offering of an honorific name, but Muzong did not allow it.
955.4	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To seek for aid (<i>qiuyuan</i>)	Envoys were sent for military aid.
955.9	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	The Northern Han emperor was sick.
955.11	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>) and plead (<i>qiu</i>)	Han emperor died. The envoys were sent by Liu Chengjun. He asked for himself to be installed as emperor.
955.11	L6:73	L→H	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i>)	The envoys were sent to attend the funeral and the installation of the new emperor.
955.12	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To discuss (<i>yi</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to discuss military affairs.
956.6	L6:73	H→L	Envoys	To discuss (<i>yi</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to discuss military affairs.
957.5	L6:74	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
958.11	L6:75	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to inform that Zhou had invaded Han. The envoys arrived again in the same month.
959.8	Z294:9597	L→H	Envoys	To order (<i>ming</i> 命)	Liao Muzong ordered Northern Han to disturb the Later Zhou frontier.

960.6	L6:76	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Song invaded Han. Muzong commanded A'la 阿剌 and Xiao Siwen 蕭思溫 to help Han.
960.7	L6:76	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Song captured Shizhou 石州 and Luzhou 潞州 rebelled.
963.2	L6:78	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>) and beg (<i>qi</i>)	The envoys reported that the Han court wanted to inspect frontier zones and asked for aid.
963.7	L6:78	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Song invaded Han.
963.1	L6:78	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Song invaded Han.
964.1	L7:81	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Because Song attacked Han, the envoys frantically rode horses to report it.
964.2	L7:81	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	They defeated the Song army in Shizhou.
964.4	L7:81	H→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	Han defeated Song.
966.8	L7:84	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	The envoys provided golden arms and armors.
966.1	L7:84	L→H	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i>)	The Han empress dowager died. The envoys were sent to offer condolence money (<i>jindiao</i> 賻弔).
966.12	L7:84	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
968.7	L7:86	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	Han emperor died.
968.7	L7:86	L→H	Envoys	To condole (<i>diao</i>)	Because the Han emperor died, the envoys were sent to attend the funeral.
968.9	Q 5:54	H→L	Envoys	To offer up (<i>chang</i>) and seek aid (<i>qinyuan</i>)	As Song invaded Northern Han. Liu Jiyuan 劉繼元 offered up a tributary memorial and asked for military aid.
969.2	L7:87	H→L	Envoys	To beg (<i>qi</i>)	As the new emperor succeeded, the envoys asked for official installation from Liao.

969.2	L7:87	L→H	Han Zhifan 韓知範	To install (<i>ce</i>)	Han was sent to the Han court to install Liu Jiuyan
969.2	L7:87	H→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The envoys brought a white deer.
969.5	L8:90	H→L	Li Kuangbi 李匡弼 Liu Jiwen 劉繼文 Li Yuansu 李元素	To celebrate (<i>he</i>)	
970.12	L7:91	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
971.6	L8:91	H→L	Envoys	To inquire after (<i>wengjin</i>) the emperor	From this moment, the Han court sent envoys to inquire after the Liao emperor every month.
971.1	L8:92	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
972.2	L8:92	H→L	Envoys	To celebrate (<i>he</i>)	Because the imperial prince was born, Han sent envoys to celebrate the birth.
973.1	L8:93	H→L	Envoys	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	
973.6	L8:93	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys came to report the situation between Han and Song.
973.12	L8:93	H→L	Envoys	To ask (<i>bing</i> 稟)	The Han court wanted to change the reign name so they asked for permission.
975.2	L8:94	H→L	Liu Jiwen	To provide tribute (<i>gong</i>)	Liu provided goods as tribute.
976.8	L8:95	H→L	Envoys	To talk (<i>yan</i> 言)	The envoys said that “Meeting Open to All” 無遮會 was conducted on the birthday of Jingzong.
976.8	L8:95	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>gao</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to report the situation between Han and Song.
976.9	L8:95	H→L	Envoys	To plead (<i>qiu</i>) for aid	Song invaded Han. Jingzong dispatched Yelü Sha 耶律沙 and Dilie 敵烈 to help Han.

976.9	L8:95	H→L	Lu Jun 盧俊	To report (<i>qao</i>)	As Song put pressure on the frontier, Lu Jun was dispatched to report it.
976.1	L8:96	H→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	The Liao military let Song retreat from the frontier.
976.12	L8:96 L9:99	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>qao</i>) and beg (<i>qi</i>)	Han reported that the Song military invaded again and asked for provisions. In the third month of 977, millet was provided.
977.5	L9:99	H→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>) and report (<i>qao</i>)	The envoys showed appreciation for the provided provisions and also reported the situation between Han and Song.
977.7	L9:99	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>qao</i>)	Song invaded Han.
977.7	L9:99	L→H	Envoys	To assist (<i>zhu</i> 助)	Liao supported Han with horses for battle.
977.8	L9:99	H→L	Envoys	To give (<i>jin</i>)	The Han envoys provided wine.
977.1	L9:100	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>qao</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to report the situation between Han and Song.
977.11	L9:100	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>qao</i>)	The envoys were dispatched to report the situation between Han and Song.
979.2	L9:101	H→L	Envoys	To beg (<i>qi</i>) for aid	As Song put pressure on the frontier, the envoys asked for help. Jingzong dispatched Yelü Sha and Dile to help them.
979.3	L9:101	H→L	Envoys	To show appreciation (<i>xie</i>)	The envoys showed appreciation for providing peace for their military and commoners.
979.3	L9:101	H→L	Envoys	To report (<i>qao</i>)	Song military appeared in the frontier. Jingzong dispatched Han Bo 韓侂 and Yelü Shanbu 耶律善補.

The envoys came to report military tactics.
During the same month, Lu Jun came
from Daizhou by urging his horse.

To report (*gaō*)

Envoys

H→L

L9:101

979.3

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