

The T'ang Imperial Family

The single most important political objective for the T'ang ruling house was ensuring the orderly succession to the throne and the continuity of their dynasty. In a system where so many powers were vested in the sovereign, it was vitally important that there should always be a capable man on the throne, able to provide leadership for his court and stability for the dynastic regime, as well as to mediate among his ministers and make essential decisions. The T'ang house, which came from the northwestern aristocracy, at first operated a style of government common among the northern peoples in which the emperor ruled through achieving whenever possible consensus among his council of minister-advisers. To do this effectively he also needed to exercise unquestioned authority over them, and when necessary to enforce his own decisions with or without their concurrence.

THE SUCCESSION

The succession of an unsuitable ruler could be a disaster: a violent or tyrannical emperor could easily alienate not only the people as a whole but also the ministers and officials through whom he had to act; a feckless and inattentive ruler would allow his proper authority to be usurped by his ministers or worse by self-seeking and sycophantic favorites. The succession of a child-emperor raised especially difficult problems; it automatically required a regency, which would place the control of the court in the hands either of a dowager-empress, or of a dominant chief minister. Such a succession carried the threat of factional dissention, or worse, a threat to the dynastic family's continued dominance.

Moreover, the succession of a very young emperor could set off a chain reaction (on emperors' lifespans, see table 1, appended). If he died young, and this was not unlikely, for an immature young emperor barely in his teens was presented with every sort of temptation to excess and self-indul-

ence, this could set the stage either for a further succession by an infant son or, if the young emperor died without male issue, for the selection of a prince out of the direct line of succession. In either case this could lead to serious factional disputes, and become the prelude to a series of successions outside the normal pattern. This happened, for example, between 820 and 846, when five emperors succeeded to the throne in a quarter century, at a time when the court and empire urgently needed stability and strong leadership.

The throne was the only patrimony in the empire where the succession did not automatically pass from father to eldest son by the principal consort, or, if the eldest son had predeceased his father, either to his eldest grandson, or, if there were no grandsons, to a younger son. To avert the possibility of the succession to the throne of an inept or unsuitable descendant, and to avoid any chance of a disputed succession, it was usual to select and appoint an heir-apparent (*huang t'ai-tzu* 皇太子; *t'ai-tzu* 太子) early in each reign (for a chronological list of heirs-apparent, and their rank by birth order among siblings, see table 2, appended). The emperor and his advisers could, in theory, designate any of the royal princes, and since many T'ang emperors had large numbers of sons, the choice was wide. But seniority was important: the older the succeeding emperor, the less the chance of political instability. Thus the eldest son was the normal first choice. Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (r. 712-56), for example, was appointed heir-apparent by his father, Jui-tsung 睿宗 (r. 684-90, 710-12), in 710 only after his elder brother Li Ch'eng-ch'i 李成器, who had a better claim to the succession and had served as heir-apparent during Jui-tsung's earlier reign under the tutelage of empress Wu 武后, had declined in his favor.¹ At times, when there seemed a particular need to settle the succession beyond the next generation, the emperor could select one of the heir-apparent's sons as the imperial grandson (*huang t'ai-sun* 皇太孫), although there was disagreement about the propriety of doing this while the heir-apparent was himself still alive.² In such cases the infant prince was assigned preceptors

and given an establishment of officials in the same way, though on a lesser scale, as the heir-apparent.

The Heir-Apparent

The installation of an heir-apparent was a major political act. It was conducted with elaborate ritual, by the emperor in full court,³ and the occasion was marked by a major Act of Grace (*ta she* 大赦) including an empire-wide amnesty, and often some days of "public license" (*p'u* 醺).⁴

would pass to his five-year-old son, not to another of his sons by a concubine. Again, at the end of Kao-tsung's reign in 682, after Li Hsien, the future emperor Chung-tsung, was installed as heir-apparent, his eldest son Li Chung-jun was appointed *huang t'ai-sun*, once again as a measure to stabilize the succession. When Chung-tsung was dethroned by empress Wu, and banished to Fang-chou in 684 this appointment was canceled. See *CTS* 6, p. 116; 86, p. 2835; and Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修, Sung Ch'i 宋祁 et al., *Hsin Tang-shu* 新唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975; hereafter, *HTS*) 81, p. 3593. Another case occurred when empress Wu finally seized the throne in 690. The former puppet-emperor Jui-tsung was reduced to the rank of imperial heir (*huang-ssu*), and his eldest son, who had been heir-apparent, was given the title imperial grandson (*huang-sun*); see *CTS* 95, p. 3009.

³ This ritual is specified in Hsiao Sung 蕭嵩 et al., [*Ta Tang*] *K'ai-yuan li* 大唐開元禮 (Tokyo: Koten kenkyū kai, 1972; hereafter, *KYL*) installing heirs-apparent, see Sung Min-ch'iu 宋敏求, *Tang ta chao ling chi* 唐大詔令集 (Peking: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1959; hereafter, *TCLC*) 27, pp. 93-96; and the brevets of appointment (*ts'ü*), *TCLC* 28, pp. 98-101. *THY* 4, pp. 47-48, has a description of the ritual, "on a reduced scale because of the emperor's being unwell," observed at the installation of Mu-tsung's heir-apparent in the 12th mo., 822 (translated following; a fuller account is given in Wang Ch'in-jo 王欽若 et al., *Ts'efu yüan-huei* 冊府元龜 [Peking: Chung-hua, 1960; hereafter, *TFYK*] 257, pp. 15a-16b).

The emperor presided "beneath the eaves"; the ceremony was accompanied by the full court orchestra (*kung-hsien*) and the entire imperial bodyguard were deployed. The courtiers assembled by rank outside Hsüan-cheng Gate, took some food in the covered galleries, and then dressed in their full court robes and caps, wearing their swords and sandals. Then they entered the main courtyard (*cheng-ya*) through Yüeh-hua Gate. A quarter-hour after dawn they entered the court; the emperor took his place beneath the eaves attended by the ranks of eunuchs. The heir-apparent approached on foot from Ch'ung-ming Gate followed and protected by the officials of the palace, two of the consorts of royal princesses (*fu-ma*) supporting his robes and cap, and the ritual commissioner (*li-i shih*) conducted him toward the emperor. When he arrived the orchestra played, the fan insignia were opened, and the assembled courtiers made their obeisance. The heir-apparent advanced as far as the southeastern Dragon's Head (these *ch'ü-t'ou*, were the sculptured heads of dragons ornamenting the stone balustrade of the great stairway leading up to the audience hall), made a double obeisance and received the brevet of investiture. The provisional president of the Secretariat Tu Yüan-ying knelt and read the text of the brevet, and when he was finished gave it to the heir-apparent, who again made a double obeisance and performed a dance (*wu-tao*), before retiring to his royal pavilion (*mu-tien*) at Ch'ung-ming Gate. When the assembled officials had finished offering their congratulations to the emperor, they went to Ch'ung-ming Gate to pay their respects to the heir-apparent. The heir ordered the curtains of his pavilion be raised and returned their obeisance holding his tablet of office. The palace officials bowed and received the tablet from him.

⁴ On major Acts of Grace, see Brian McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy* (Honolulu: U. of

¹ Liu Hsiü 劉昫 et al., *Chiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1975; hereafter, *CTS*) 95, p. 3010; Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑 (Peking: Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1956; hereafter, *TCTC*) 209, p. 6650.

² Wang P'u 王溥, *Tang hui-yao* 唐會要 (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1935; hereafter, *THY*) 4, pp. 49-50. This first happened in 642, when T'ai-tsung was worried about public concern over the heir-apparent Ch'eng-ch'ien's conduct and fitness to rule. To attempt to stabilize the situation he issued an edict ensuring that if the heir-apparent were to die, succession

Subsequently, his "capping" (*kuan* 冠), the ceremony marking his coming to maturity, and his assuming "adult dress" (*yüan-fu* 元服),⁵ were also occasions of great state ritual. His marriage was also a major dynastic decision, for it involved the selection of a principal consort (*fei* 妃) who would probably become the future empress, and it too was accompanied by very elaborate ceremonies.⁶

Once the sovereign-in-waiting was selected, he was placed in the care of experienced statesmen who would act as his mentors, and took up residence in his own palace, the Eastern Palace (Tung-kung 東宮; sometimes called Ch'ing-kung 青宮), where he presided over a large staff of officials, deliberately designed as a microcosm of the central government, to accustom him to the routine of governing with royal dignity. (This organization is described in detail, below.) From time to time, if the emperor was temporarily incapacitated or was absent from the capital on a military campaign or a royal progress (*hsün-shou* 巡守, "tour of inspection"),⁷ the heir-apparent would be appointed temporary regent (*chien-kuo* 監國), in order to give him experience of actually governing the empire, of course under the careful supervision of the highest ranking ministers at court.⁸ At other times he might be deputed the responsibility of reviewing criminal sentences or deciding minor legal disputes with the same end in mind.⁹

It was important that the heir-apparent's position of unquestioned superiority over the rest of the imperial sons be maintained. Early in the T'ang, as we see below, every prince of the blood (*ch'in wang* 親王) had his own personal household establishment comprising a princely administration (*wang-fu* 王府), a group of tutors and adviser-companions, and his personal guards-units. The princes and royal princesses (*kung-chu* 公主) also had offices to administer the fiefs of maintenance that provided their revenues.

Hawaii P., 1981). For a sample of Acts of Grace issued to commemorate the installation of a new heir-apparent, see *TTCCL* 29, pp. 103-7.

⁵ *THY* 26, pp. 495-96; *KYL* 110; *TTCCL* 29, pp. 107-8.

⁶ *KYL* 111. For edicts appointing consorts for heirs-apparent, see *TTCCL* 31, pp. 120-21.

⁷ On royal progresses, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the Tang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1985), pp. 161-69.

⁸ For collections of edicts appointing the heir-apparent as temporary regent, see *TTCCL* 30, pp. 110-15; *TFYK* 259, pp. 3b-9b. Until the 8th c. the term used for such a temporary regency was *chien-kuo*. The heir might also sometimes be deputed with "the duty of deciding all important matters, military and civil" (*ch'u-chüeh chün-kuo chi-wu*). In the 9th c. the common term used was *kou-tang chün-kuo cheng-shih*, "manage the civil and military affairs of the empire."

⁹ E. g., *TFYK* 259, pp. 4a-b, 6a-7a.

Great pains were taken to prevent other princes and princesses from flaunting their power in excess in an attempt to rival or overshadow the heir-apparent.¹⁰ A careful balance needed to be struck between allowing the princes their proper dignity, and ensuring that they and their entourages did not constitute a political faction, or in any way threaten the heir's succeeding to the throne.

In the eighth century the personal establishments of princes and princesses were gradually whittled away, the ranks of their advisers reduced almost to vanishing point, and their revenues cut to the bone. The heir-apparent alone among the royal children kept his large establishment and this problem of potential rivalry receded.

Even after the formal installation of an heir-apparent had been carried out, the emperor could change his mind, and replace him.¹¹ Removing an heir-apparent was an extremely serious act. Although the empress Wu did this twice, and also arbitrarily dethroned two young emperors to secure her own power, she was, as in so many areas of politics, an exception. In normal circumstances an established heir-apparent could not be replaced arbitrarily, but the act had to be justified by accusations either that the heir-apparent was plotting to usurp his father's throne by armed force (T'ai-tsung 太宗, r. 626-49, having come to power in just this way); or that he was building his own political faction with a view to usurpation; or that he was irretrievably delinquent or mentally incompetent. Such accusations cannot, in most cases, be tested for lack of surviving evidence. But the fact that they were made at all shows that there was a common perception that any decision changing the succession needed powerful moral or political justification to make it generally acceptable. The emperor usually consulted with his ministers about such cases, but most officials were unwilling to accept responsibility for such a potentially dangerous decision, and deferred to the emperor's opinion, claiming that the succession was a personal or family matter.

Immediately before an emperor's death, an imperial testamentary edict (*i-chao* 遺詔, or *i-shu* 遺書) was promulgated, usually confirming the

¹⁰ See the memorials of Kao Chi-fu, cited in *THY* 26, pp. 497-98; others quoted in Wu Ching 吳兢, *Chen-kuan cheng-yao* 貞觀政要, ed. Harada Taneshige 原田種成, *Jōgan seiyō teihon* 貞觀政要定本 (Tokyo: Tōyōbunka kenkyūjo kiyō, 1962; hereafter, *CKCY*) 4, pp. 113-31; those by Ch'u Sui-liang in Li Fang 李昉 et al., *Wen-yuan ying-hua* 文苑英華 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1966; hereafter, *WYTH*) 623, pp. 10a-11b; *CTS* 76, p. 2654.

¹¹ For convenient collections of documentation on the succession, see *THY* 4, pp. 39-44, under "Ch'u-chün 儲君," and *TFYK* 227, pp. 1a-19a.

choice that had been made when the current heir-apparent had been installed.¹² The testament was read by a senior member of government in the presence of the deceased emperor's encoffined body in one of the great audience halls, and the new emperor succeeded to the throne "before his father's coffin," as a solemn public sign that the deceased emperor's will was being done. In the ninth century, as we shall see, a succession of emperors came to the throne only days after having been appointed heir-apparent, and there were well-founded suspicions that the whole process, the selection and installation of the heir, and the composition of a testamentary edict had been hastily cooked up by his palace eunuchs after the late emperor's death or while he was incapacitated by terminal illness.

Before his succession, in normal times, the heir would have spent some years in preparation for the responsibilities of his new role. From the very beginning of the dynasty there was a clear perception of the necessity for this, clearly expressed for example, in a long memorial presented to T'ai-tsung by Liu Chi 劉洎 (d. 645) shortly after the future Kao-tsung 高宗 had been appointed as heir-apparent.¹³ A very complex administrative organization was established to give the future emperor training and personal experience of officialdom and of the routines of administering the empire.

The Heir-Apparent's Administration

The heir-apparent to the throne headed a personal establishment known as the Eastern Palace (Tung-kung), which was a copy in miniature of the government of the emperor.¹⁴ The idea behind this was not simply that he should live in a grand style that set him apart from the other royal princes, but that by superintending the activities of a large and varied

household he would be familiarized with the solemn routines and procedures that would face him every day after his accession. Like the emperor, he had provision for the following posts:

1. three preceptors (*san-shih*): grand preceptor to the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu t'ai-shih* 太子太師), grand adviser to the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu t'ai-fu* 太傅), and grand guardian of the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu t'ai-pao* 太保);
2. their deputies: lesser preceptor to the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu shao-shih* 太子少師), lesser adviser to the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu shao-fu* 少傅), and lesser guardian of the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu shao-pao* 少保).

All these posts were extremely high-ranking positions of honor; the three preceptors each held the lower-first rank (or, 1.2),¹⁵ their deputies the lower-second rank (2.2). These preceptors were normally elderly statesmen of great distinction and unblemished reputation, to whom the heir-apparent was expected to render deep respect and reverence. On formal occasions they acted as his escort of honor (*lu-pu* 鹵簿). Some or all of the posts were frequently left vacant, since they were only to be filled if a suitable candidate was available. When they were filled they provided sinecures of great dignity and moral prestige for retired holders of the highest office.¹⁶

Supervision of the everyday conduct of the heir-apparent was largely left in the hands of lesser, though still very high-ranking, officials – his four monitors (*t'ai-tzu pin-k'o* 太子賓客), who held rank 3.1. They too were, elderly officials whose duties were to accompany, assist and advise him in

¹² The testamentary edicts of many of the Tang emperors are collected in *TTCLC* 11-12, pp. 66-73. The testaments of emperors who abdicated (*i-kao*) are in *TTCLC* 12, pp. 73-74.

¹³ For this important memorial see *THY* 4, pp. 39-40; *CTS* 74, pp. 2609-11; *CKCY* 4, pp. 120-24; Ma Tuan-lin 馬端臨, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 文獻通考, in *Shih t'ung* 十通 (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1935; hereafter, *WHTK*) 623, pp. 5a-6b; and Tung Kao 董誥 et al., [*Ch'in-ting Ch'uan Tang wen* 欽定全唐文 (Taipei: Hua-wen shu-ch'ü, 1965; hereafter, *CTW*)] 151, pp. 2a-4b.

¹⁴ See Li Lin-fu 李林甫 et al., *Ta Tang liu-tien* 大唐六典 (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-p'an she, 1962; hereafter, *TLT*) 26, p. 27-28; *THY* 67, pp. 1167-72; Tu Yu 杜佑, *Tung tien* 通典 (hereafter, *TT*), printed in *Shih t'ung* (see prev. n.) 30, pp. 171-76; *CTS* 44, pp. 1906-13; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1291-1303 (trans. Robert des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires et traité de l'armée: Traduits de la Nouvelle histoire des Tang* [chaps. XLVI-L] [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947-48; hereafter, *Fonct.*] 2, pp. 570-628).

¹⁵ Tang ranks followed the basic *chiu-p'in* 九品 ("nine ranks") system. Below, I use two numerals separated by a period, the first referring to the "nine ranks." The second numeral shows further subdivisions into two classes: *cheng* 正 (upper) and *ts'ung* 從 (lower). Ranks 1-3 were subdivided only to that level; thus, e. g., 1.1 means upper-first, or first rank, upper class 正一品, while 1.2 would be lower-first, or first rank, lower class 從一品. Ranks 4-9, however, contained a further division of both upper and lower, the resulting subdivisions being called *shang* 上 and *hsia* 下. Thus 4-9 each had four grades in all. For these lower ranks, the second numeral refers to the subdivisions: 6.1 would thus be upper grade of the upper class of the sixth rank 正六品上; 6.2 is lower grade/upper class 正六品下; 6.3 is upper grade/lower class 從六品上; and 6.4 is lower grade/lower class 從六品下.

¹⁶ *TLT* 26, pp. 10b-13a; *THY* 67, p. 1167; *TT* 30, pp. 171B-72A-C; *CTS* 44, p. 1906; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1291-92; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 570-72. For the formalities surrounding the heir's reception of his three preceptors, see *THY* 26, pp. 496-97.

his duties, and to help him in his ritual observances.¹⁷ There were also his readers-in-waiting (*shih-tu* 侍讀), scholarly officials holding substantive posts elsewhere in the bureaucracy who were appointed, as a concurrent responsibility, to lecture him on the canonical literature.¹⁸ Monitors were first appointed in 656 and at first often seem to have been chief ministers performing this function as a concurrent duty. The posts of both monitors and readers-in-waiting were often left vacant. All these admonitory officials had a relationship with the prince not unlike that of the chief ministers with the emperor. In a well-established Confucian tradition, they were to accustom him to paying heed to the advice, both moral and practical, of elder statesmen.

The central administration of the heir-apparent's establishment comprised three offices paralleling the three major ministries (*san-sheng* 三省) of the central government. The Intendance-General of the heir-apparent (*Chan-shih fu* 詹事府) was responsible for the control and administration of the Eastern Palace, paralleling the Department of State Affairs as its central executive department. The two Secretariats of the heir-apparent, the Left 左 and Right 右 *Ch'un-fang* 春坊 (also known collectively as the *Erh fang* 二坊), paralleled the Secretariat (in the case of the Left Secretariat, *Tso ch'un-fang*) and the Chancellery (in the case of the Right Secretariat, *Yu ch'un-fang*). Like the Chancellery and Secretariat at court, the heir-apparent's two secretariats handled his correspondence, drafted documents and memorials, and drew up his orders (*ling-shu* 令書), which had the force of law like imperial edicts. The acts of the heir-apparent, like those of the court itself, were formally recorded, and these documents became matters of record, and were sent to the Historiographer's Office (*Shih-kuan* 史館) annually.¹⁹ When the heir-apparent was placed in charge of government affairs because of the emperor's temporary absence or incapacity, the heads of these three offices were expected to provide the prince with especially careful guidance, and under such circumstances they were known as the "commissioners of the three offices" (*san-ssu shih* 三司使).²⁰

¹⁷ *TLT* 26, pp. 13a-b; *THY* 67, p. 11678; *TT* 30, p. 172A; *CTS* 44, p. 1906; *HTS* 49A, p. 1292; *Fonct.* 2, p. 572.

¹⁸ See *THY* 26, pp. 510-11; *TT* 30, p. 172A; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 572-73.

¹⁹ Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the Tang* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1992), p. 23.

²⁰ *HTS* 49A, p. 1293.

For a brief period, from 662 to 670, the heir-apparent's court also had its own internal Censorate, the *Kuei-fang* 桂坊, responsible for the control and discipline of the officials of his staff.²¹ After its abolition, the functions of maintaining discipline and investigating malpractice among the heir-apparent's officials were vested in two judicial inspectors (*ssu-chih* 司直), on the staff of the Intendance-General.²²

The Intendance-general (chan-shih fu) of the heir-apparent

The Intendance-General was the executive of the heir-apparent's establishment.²³ Its intendant-general (*t'ai-tzu chan-shih* 太子詹事 held rank 3.1 and was thus nominally the equal of the presidents of the Chancellery and Secretariat, while the deputy intendant-general (*shao chan-shih* 少詹事) held rank 4.1, making him the equal of their vice-presidents. Under their control were the household and the guards of the heir-apparent. The household comprised the Three Courts of the heir-apparent (*T'ai-tzu san-ssu* 太子三寺): the Court of Domestic Services (*Chia-ling ssu* 家令寺), the Court of Ceremonial Affairs (*T'ai-tzu lei-keng ssu* 太子率更寺), and the Court of Equipages (*T'ai-tzu p'u-ssu* 太子僕寺).

The Court of Domestic Services was responsible for the provision of food, for the granaries and storehouses of the Eastern Palace, and apparently for the heir-apparent's estates.²⁴ It controlled three subordinate offices, the Office of Foodstuffs (*Shih-kuan shu* 食官署),²⁵ the Office of Granaries (*Tien-ts'ang shu* 典倉署)²⁶ and the Office of Storehouses (*Ssu-tsang shu* 司藏署).²⁷ The second of these offices was responsible for managing the heir-apparent's farms, and for the maintenance of their slaves, and of the families of corvée laborers designated for service in the Eastern Palace.

²¹ *TLT* 26, pp. 17a-18a; *THY* 67, p. 1168; *TT* 30, p. 172B; *Fonct.* 2, p. 576.

²² *TLT* 26, pp. 17a-18a; *CTS* 44, p. 1907; *HTS* 49A, p. 1293.

²³ *TLT* 26, pp. 13b-17b; *THY* 67, pp. 1167-68; *TT* 30, p. 172A-C; *CTS* 44, pp. 1907-9; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1292-93; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 574-77.

²⁴ *TLT* 27, pp. 5b-8b; *THY* 67, p. 1171; *TT* 30, p. 174A-C; *CTS* 44, pp. 1910-11; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1297-98; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 598-603.

²⁵ *TLT* 27, pp. 8b-10a; *TT* 30, p. 174B; *CTS* 44, p. 1910; *HTS* 49A, p. 1297; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 600-1.

²⁶ *TLT* 27, pp. 10a-b; *TT* 30, p. 174B; *CTS* 44, p. 1911; *HTS* 49A, p. 1297; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 601-2.

²⁷ *TLT* 27, pp. 11a-b; *TT* 30, p. 174B; *CTS* 44, p. 1911; *HTS* 49A, p. 1298; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 602-3.

The Court of Ceremonial Affairs had broad responsibilities.²⁸ Its head (*lei-keng ling* 率更令) was responsible for the various ritual observances that had to be performed by the heir-apparent, for his attendance at the *shih-tien* 釋奠 ceremony at the Confucian temple, and for the lectures on the canonical texts provided for his instruction. The office also was responsible for the clepsydra (water clock) in the Eastern Palace, and for the maintenance of such other symbols of regular and correct normative behavior as the pitch pipes for its musicians. The office was lastly responsible for the discipline and punishment of officials in the heir-apparent's establishment, although many cases seem to have been referred to the Supreme Court of Justice (大理寺).

The Court of Equipages was responsible for the carriages, palanquins, sedan chairs in the Eastern Palace, the upkeep of the heir-apparent's stables and pastures and the provision of fodder for them, and also for the keeping of the insignia and ceremonial arms for the heir-apparent's court, and for funeral ceremonies.²⁹ It controlled a special subordinate Office for the Stables and Pastures of the heir-apparent (*Chiu-mu shu* 廄牧署),³⁰ which was responsible for the provision and preparation of horses and carriages, and also supervised the many pastures that were reserved for the heir-apparent's needs.

Lastly, the Intendance-General was in control of the Ten Guards of the heir-apparent, described below.

The Left Secretariat of the heir-apparent (t'ai-tzu tso ch'un-fang)

The Left Secretariat was the larger and more important of the two parallel secretariats. It looked after the official documents issued by the heir-apparent and the memorials received by him.³¹

The Left Secretariat was headed by two mentors (*t'ai-tzu tso shu-tzu* 太子左庶子) rank 4.1 and two companions (*chung-yün* 中允) rank 5.1. Beneath them were the following:

1. two remonstrance secretaries (*ssu-i lang* 司儀郎), rank 6.1, who kept

²⁸ *TLT* 27, pp. 12a-15a; *THY* 67, pp. 1171-72; *TY* 30, p. 174; *CTS* 44, p. 1911; *HTS* 49A, p. 1298; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 603-5.

²⁹ *TLT* 27, pp. 15a-17b; *THY* 67, p. 1172; *TY* 30, pp. 174C-75A; *CTS* 44, p. 1911; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1298-99; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 606-7.

³⁰ *TLT* 27, pp. 18a-19a; *TY* 30, pp. 174C-175A; *CTS* 44, p. 1911; *HTS* 49A, p. 1911; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 607-8.

³¹ *TLT* 26, pp. 18a-32b; *THY* 67, pp. 1168-71; *TY* 30, pp. 172C-74A; *CTS* 44, pp. 1907-9; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1293-96; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 577-94.

the record of the heir-apparent's daily acts (*tung-kung chi-chu* 東宮記注) and prepared material for the Historiographer's Office;

2. the grand counsellor of the left (*tso yü-te* 左諭德), rank 4.2, who was charged with providing moral guidance to the prince;
3. five censor-counsellors (*tso tsan-shan tai-fu* 左贊善大夫), rank 5.1, who transmitted the prince's orders and proffered criticism of his actions in the same way as the remembrancers and omissioners at court; and
4. necessary clerical officials and staff.

The Secretariat of the Left also supervised a number of specialized offices. Most important of these, and again paralleling the organization of the Chancellery and Secretariat, were the Ch'ung-wen Academy 崇文館, a small college with a staff of scholars and collators and fifteen students,³² and the heir-apparent's Library Service (*Ssu-ching chü* 司經局) headed by two director-librarians (*hsien-ma* 先馬), rank 5.4.³³ This was not only a library, but also an archive for all documents, maps, and pictures submitted to the heir-apparent.

Four other subordinate offices had charge of the domestic arrangements of the Eastern Palace and the heir-apparent:

1. the Service of Food (*Tien-shan chü* 典膳局);³⁴
2. Service of Medicines (*Yao-tsang chü* 藥藏局);³⁵
3. Service of Furnishings (*Nei-chih chü* 內直局);³⁶ and
4. Service for Palace Internal Arrangements (*Tien-she chü* 典設局).³⁷

Each of these had two (four in the case of Internal Arrangements) chiefs of service (*lang* 郎) and two assistants (*ch'eng* 丞) controlling large numbers of palace servants and attendants.

5. Service of the Palace Gatekeepers (*Kung-men chü* 宮門局),³⁸ whose chiefs and assistants commanded the 100 gate-porters and other employees charged with the security of the Eastern Palace gates.

³² *TLT* 26, pp. 22b-23a; *THY* 67, pp. 1117-18; *TY* 30, p. 173B-C; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, p. 1294; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 584-85.

³³ *TLT* 26, pp. 23a-25a; *THY* 67, pp. 1170-71; *TY* 30, p. 173C; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1908-9; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 585-88.

³⁴ *TLT* 26, pp. 25a-b; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, p. 1295; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 588-89.

³⁵ *TLT* 26, pp. 26a-b; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, p. 1295; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 589-90.

³⁶ *TLT* 26, pp. 26b-30a; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, p. 1295; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 590-91.

³⁷ *TLT* 26, pp. 30a-31a; *THY* 67, p. 1171; *CTS* 44, p. 1908; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1295-96; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 591-93.

³⁸ *TLT* 26, pp. 31a-32b; *CTS* 44, pp. 1908-9; *HTS* 49A, p. 1296; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 593-94.

The Right Secretariat of the heir-apparent (t'ai-tzu yü ch'un-fang)

This office shared the handling of the heir-apparent's business and paperwork with the Left Secretariat.³⁹ Its two mentors (*t'ai-tzu yü* 右 *shu-tzu*), rank 4.2, and two companion-secretaries (*chung she-jen* 中舍人), rank 5.2, were responsible for transmitting the heir-apparent's orders and decisions. There were also four secretaries to the heir-apparent (*t'ai-tzu she-jen* 太子舍人), rank 6.1, who drafted the prince's orders, and his formal communications with the emperor. The Secretariat also had eight protocol officers (*t'ung-shih she-jen* 通事舍人), who were responsible for the reception of visitors and for handling their official communications with the prince. The Right Secretariat was thus the main channel of communication to the heir-apparent.

Also forming a part of its staff were a grand counsellor of the right (*yü yü-te*) and five censor-counsellors (*yü* 右 *tsan-shan tai-fu*) corresponding to those in the Left Secretariat, and their clerical staff. All officials of the Right Secretariat held equal rank with their opposite numbers in the Left Secretariat.

The heir-apparent's guards

The heir-apparent, like the emperor, had control of his own personal military forces. These comprised two separate groups.⁴⁰ First was the personal bodyguard of the heir-apparent, the so-called Three Personal Guards (*San-fu* 參府), comprising the Personal Guard (*Ch'in-wei* 親衛), the Merit Guard (*Hsün-wei* 勳衛) and the Standby Guard (*I-wei* 翊衛). These served as personal bodyguards and acted as ceremonial attendants on the heir-apparent at state functions. They paralleled the Five Personal Guards (*Wu-fu* 五府) of the emperor. Their members were "guards-officials" (*wei-kuan* 衛官) and were recruited from among the sons of officials and high-ranking military men.

Second were the Ten Guards of the Heir-Apparent (*T'ai-tzu shih shuai-fu* 太子十率府),⁴¹ which paralleled the Sixteen Guards of the Emperor, and were organized in much the same way. Each guard had a permanently appointed group of commanders and officers; some included detachments from among the Three Personal Guards, but the main body of

troops was provided from militia (*che-chung fu* 折衝府) units who came to the capital and served for short periods of duty with the Guard in regular rotation. The heir-apparent's guards were much smaller than those of the emperor. Des Rotours has calculated that each guard probably had between 400 and 700 men at full strength.⁴²

Like the Guards of the Emperor, each of the Guards of the Heir-Apparent had its permanent headquarters staff. A general (*shuai* 率) with two deputies (*fu-shuai* 副率) held overall command. These were high-ranking officials, holding ranks 4.1 and 4.3, respectively. Beneath them was an adjutant (*chang-shih* 長史) responsible for the day-to-day operation of the guard and for making executive decisions. He had a chief administrative clerk (*lu-shih ts'an-chün shih* 錄事參軍事) and a group of clerks, to whom were responsible the administrators (*ts'an-chün shih* 參軍事) of the guard's various special administrative services (*ts'ao* 曹). These were each responsible for specific duties:

1. the Service of Granaries (*Ts'ang-ts'ao* 倉曹) for rations and stores, building materials, and the like;
2. Service of Troops (*Ping-ts'ao* 兵曹) for the men;
3. Service of Helmets (*Chou-ts'ao* 冑曹) for the armory, weapons, and defensive armor; and
4. in some guards there was also a Service of Cavalry (*Ch'i-ts'ao* 騎曹) responsible for the guard's mounts.⁴³

The Service of Granaries was responsible for keeping the service records of the Guard's civil officials, the Service of Troops for those of the military officers and soldiers. In most of the Guards the Service of Troops was also responsible for its horses. The Chien-men Shuai-fu 監門率府 and Nei Shuai-fu 內率府 guards had no Service of Granaries, and the Service of Troops took over these duties as well.

The Guards fell into two groups. The two Chien-men Shuai-fu and two Nei Shuai-fu, although their commanding officers held equal rank with those of the other Guards, had a reduced number of services, and their subordinate officials all held slightly lower ranks and duties somewhat different from those in the other Guards. Their military personnel were also somewhat fewer. Both groups were custodial guards. The former (Chien-

³⁹ *TLT* 26, pp. 32b-37a; *IHY* 67, p. 1171; *CTS* 44, p. 1909; *HTS* 49A, p. 1296; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 594-98.

⁴⁰ *TLT* 28; *IHY* 71, p. 1289; *TY* 30, p. 175A-C; *CTS* 44, pp. 1911-13; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1299-1303; *Foncl.* 2, pp. 608-28.

⁴¹ *TLT* 28; *CTS* 44, pp. 1911-13; *HTS* 49A, pp. 1299-1303.

⁴² For details of the complicated changes in nomenclature, see *Foncl.* 2, appendix 1.

⁴³ The various sources disagree about which guards had which administrative services, a problem nearly impossible to reconcile; see *Foncl.* 2, pp. 612-26, and nn. given there.

men) strictly controlled and recorded the passage of both people and goods in and out of the Eastern Palace. The latter (Nei) formed the heir-apparent's personal bodyguard, mounted guard in the audience hall when he received his court, when he practised ceremonial archery, and so forth. Each of these pairs of Guards included in their number some permanent-duty Guards-officers, who should not be confused with the ordinary guardsmen-soldiers (*wei-shih* 衛士) who came from the militias (*che-chung fu*) to the palace to perform their regular turns of duty, or with the "guards-officials" (*wei-kuan*) belonging to the Three Militias (*san fu*), mentioned above. These permanent-duty gate-guards (*chien-men chih-chang* 監門直長) and permanent-duty swordsmen bodyguards (*ch'ien-niu pei-shen* 千牛備身) were counted as regular officials of the seventh rank.

The other Guards, the two Wei shuai-fu 衛率府, the two Ssu-yü shuai-fu 司禦率府, and the two Ch'ing-tao shuai-fu 清道率府, had no such large cadres of soldiers holding guards-official ranks on their permanent establishment. Instead each had a group of low ranking officers with specific military duties:

1. an officer of the stairways (*ssu-chieh* 司階);
2. watch officers (*chung-hou* 中候);
3. officers of javelins (*ssu-ko* 司戈); and
4. officers of the two-pronged halberds (*ssu-chi* 司戟).

In the two Wei shuai-fu there were also ten "guards permanently on duty" (*san ch'ang-shang* 散長上) holding the lowest official rank. These officers may have held only ceremonial duties; but it is also possible that they were originally low-ranking professional soldiers permanently assigned to a military unit most of whose personnel were constantly being rotated. Perhaps their role was not unlike that of the regular army officers or non-commissioned officers assigned to Territorial Army units in the old British system.

The two Wei shuai-fu, the two Ssu-yü shuai-fu and the two Ch'ing-tao shuai-fu also included among their ranks some of the "guards-officials" belonging to the Three Militias, mentioned above. These sons of high-ranking officials, whose rank derived from hereditary privilege were employed only in these Guards, whose duties were largely ceremonial, not in the custodial guards.

Control of the Heir-Apparent's Establishment

The entire household establishment of the heir-apparent was thus

large and complex. A description in the important source-compendium *Tang liu-tien* 唐六典 lists 95 ranking officials with posts "within the current," and 122 Guards-officers holding official rank. The household services employed over 1,100 servants and specialists. Some 240 of these held established posts "outside the current," the rest were classed as "miscellaneous employees" (*tsa-jen*). The household services employed over 500 cooks, storekeepers, porters, and so forth; 95 employees in the stables; over 100 in connection with the clepsydra and the drum, which marked the hours. Finally, there would have been at least 5,000 guardsmen performing regular turns of duty in the heir-apparent's Guards.

In addition to these civilian and military employees the heir-apparent, if he was no longer a child, would have his own harem (Nei-fang 內坊). In addition to his princess-consort (*fei* 妃), his concubines were divided into five ranks:

1. two ladies of excellence (*liang-ti* 良娣, rank 3.1);
2. six ladies of excellent beauty (*liang-yüan* 良媛, rank 4.1);
3. ten ladies of inherent excellence (*ch'eng-hui* 承徽, rank 5.1);
4. sixteen ladies of clear instruction (*chao-hsün* 昭訓, rank 7.1); and
5. twenty-four ladies of decorous service (*feng-i* 奉儀, rank 9.1).

There was also a large staff of female palace attendants headed by the lady directors of his Inner Quarters (*ssu-kuei* 司閤).⁴⁴ The heir-apparent's Inner Palace establishment was not entirely autonomous. It was controlled by a special office, the T'ai-tzu nei-fang chü 太子內坊局,⁴⁵ which was subordinated to the emperor's Department of the Inner Palace Intendancy (Nei-shih sheng 內使省), while the Harem of the Heir-Apparent (T'ai-tzu nei-kuan),⁴⁶ with its various subordinate offices, seems to have come under the general control of the emperor's harem service (Nei-kuan 內官). All these offices were, of course, filled by eunuchs in the Nei-fang chü, and by female officials in the Nei-kuan.

The Nine Horse Pastures of the Heir-Apparent (Tung-kung chiu mu-chien 東宮廐牧監) were likewise not under the heir-apparent's direct control but were administered as a part of the Court of Imperial Equipages

⁴⁴ *TLT* 26, pp. 38a-40a; *CTS* 44, pp. 1909-10; *HTS* 47, pp. 1231-32; *Foncl.* 1, pp. 276-80.

⁴⁵ *CTS* 44, p. 1909; *HTS* 47, p. 1224; *Foncl.* 1, pp. 254-56.

⁴⁶ *CTS* 44, pp. 1909-10; *HTS* 47, pp. 1231-32; *Foncl.* 1, pp. 276-80.

(T'ai-p'u ssu 太僕寺).⁴⁷ It is not clear how these pasture directorates related to the Court of Equipages (P'u-ssu 僕寺) under the heir-apparent, or what relations existed between the latter and the Court of Imperial Equipages.

The Plan of the Eastern Palace and the Heir-Apparent's Offices

The heir-apparent's Eastern Palace was a large walled compound, 4894 feet from north to south and about 984 feet from east to west,⁴⁸ an area of just less than two-tenths of a square mile (or, just under half a square kilometer), which formed the easternmost section of the old Palace City (*kung-ch'eng* 宮城, *hsi-nei* 西內) in Ch'ang-an 長安.⁴⁹ It was entered from the south through the main Chia-fu Gate 嘉福門 beyond which the visitor passed through two further inner gates, Ch'ung-ming Gate 重明門 and Chia-te Gate 嘉德門, to reach the large main courtyard in front of Chia-te Hall 嘉德殿, the great audience hall. On the west and east of this great courtyard were gates leading to inner courtyards containing the offices of the heir-apparent's two secretariats, the Tso ch'un-fang and Yu ch'un-fang. The Left Secretariat together with the Ch'ung-wen Academy and the heir-apparent's Library lay on the east, through the Feng-i Gate 奉義門; the Right Secretariat on the west through the Feng-hua Gate 奉化門. Their position on either side of the central axis was exactly parallel to the layout of the Secretariat and Chancellery in the "public area" of the emperor's palace. Behind Chia-te Hall was a range of other halls set one behind the other on the central axis, each dominating its own walled enclosure: the Ch'ung-chiao 重教殿, Li-cheng 麗正殿, Kuang-t'ien 光天殿, and Ch'eng-en 承恩殿 Halls. Behind the latter was the northern gate of the Eastern Palace, the Yüan-te Gate 元德門, which opened into the Imperial Park (Chin yüan 禁苑). In the northern section of the Eastern Palace was the heir-apparent's own Northern Garden (Pei yüan 北苑). There were various other halls and buildings in courtyards on either side of the main range of great halls; their precise positions and functions are not

certainly known. These buildings in the rear of the palace were mostly the heir-apparent's private quarters. They included a Buddhist shrine (Fou-t'ang yüan 佛堂院), a hall for ritual archery (She-tien 射殿), the quarters for the heir-apparent's harem, and the palace kitchens, which in the latter part of the dynasty also serviced the nearby Residence of the Ten Princes.⁵⁰

The business premises of most of the administrative offices pertaining to the heir-apparent, and those of his Guards, were not in the Eastern Palace itself but occupied the northeastern section of the Imperial City (Huang-ch'eng 皇城), the administrative quarter lying immediately to the south of the main palace. The heir-apparent's offices lay immediately opposite Chia-fu Gate, the main gate of the Eastern Palace. In this compact area were the heir-apparent's Audience Hall (Tung-kung ch'ao-t'ang 東宮朝堂), the outer offices of his Intendancy-General and his two Secretariats, the offices of the various guards, and the stables and storehouses of the heir's Court of Equipages. Lü Ta-fang's 呂大防 stone map of 1080 also shows the Office of Works for the Eastern Palace (Tung-kung nei tso-fang 東宮內作坊), which is unknown in the written sources.

Was the Eastern Palace Permanently Staffed?

One major problem in trying to understand this huge and costly organization is its degree of permanence. There was not always an heir-apparent officially installed, and after 838 there was never an incumbent heir-apparent. When there was no appointed heir, obviously the Eastern Palace had to be kept in repair, since it was always to be presumed that an heir-apparent would eventually be named. In addition, the Eastern Palace began to provide some services for the imperial princes living in the Sixteen Princely Residences. But it is not at all clear whether the Eastern Palace staff was kept up to strength, or whether the whole establishment was put on a "care and maintenance" footing with a skeleton staff. Moreover, there must

⁴⁷ HTS 44, p. 1256; *Fonct.* 1, pp. 403-4.

⁴⁸ The east-west dimension is nowhere given precisely. My estimate is based on the figures in Hsü Sung 徐松, *T'ang liang-ching ch'eng-fang k'ao* 唐兩京城坊考, ed. Chang Mu 張穆 (1848; rpt. in Hiraoka Takeo 張穆平岡武夫, ed., *Chōan to Rakuyō* 長安と洛陽, vol. 6 of *Tōdai kenkyū no shiori* 唐代研究のしおり [Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku jimbun kagaku kenkyū sho, 1956]), ch. 1, p. 6a.

⁴⁹ On the Eastern Palace, see *Ch'ang-an chih* 長安志, in *Ch'ing-hsün t'ang ts'ung-shu* 經訓堂叢書 (1784 edn.; rpt. in part, Hiraoka, *Chōan to Rakuyō*, pp. 89-121) 6, pp. 4a-b; Hsü, *T'ang liang-ching* 1, pp. 6a-7a.

⁵⁰ The site of the Eastern Palace, which lies under the Ming-Ch'ing city of Hsi-an, has never been excavated. It is shown, only in general outline, on the preserved fragments of Lü Ta-fang's stone engraved map of 1080. The modern architectural historian Fu Hsi-nien 傅喜年, "T'ang-tai sui-tao hsing-mu te hsing-chih kou-tso ho suo fan-ying te ti-shang kung-shih" 唐代隧道型墓的形制构造和所反映的地上宮室, in *Wen-wu yü k'ao-k'uei lun-chi* 文物與考古論集 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-p'an she, 1986), pp. 323-43, makes a most imaginative study comparing what can be gleaned about the palace from textual evidence with the plan of the well-preserved tomb of the 11th heir-apparent, which was constructed as an analogue of the prince's earthly residence.

have been considerable differences between the total years that mature princes served and those of infant heirs-apparent.⁵¹ Very probably a large number of the posts described above were not always filled. However, posts in the Eastern Palace, like those on the staffs of royal princes, always provided the court with a large pool of available "grace and favor" appointments, comfortable sinecures that might be used to reward deserving officials and keep them employed at the capital.

Whatever their actual utility, these posts remained a considerable source of moral prestige for their incumbents. In 785, for example, the mentors of the heir-apparent's Left and Right Secretariats were promoted in rank to hold precedence over the vice-presidents (*shao-ch'ing* 少卿) of the Nine Courts.⁵² These posts were "pure" appointments (*ch'ing-kuan* 清官), although sometimes the persons appointed might well have been thought unsuitable for their responsibilities. In 813, for example the former grand master of works (*ssu-k'ung* 司空) Yü Ti 于頔 was appointed adviser (*pin-k'o* 賓客) to the newly installed heir-apparent (the future Mu-tsung 穆宗; r. 820-24). Earlier in the year he had been disgraced after a spectacular scandal involving his sons, and in 817 was demoted for failing to bring up his own sons properly. Later, when he asked to retire from office in 818 the chief ministers even suggested that he be made the heir-apparent's grand guardian, although the emperor refused.⁵³

In 830, president of the Left Secretariat Sun Ke 孫革, presented a passionately worded memorial protesting that whereas posts in the various services subordinate to his office had been traditionally filled by sons of the highest ministers with a scholarly training, who coveted such offices in spite of their low rank because they were "pure" appointments, in recent years men transferred from clerical posts "outside the current" had been appointed to them, thus confusing and defiling their moral standing. His protests were heeded.⁵⁴ Such appointments were forbidden in future; the privileged elite had won another small battle to retain their hold on these desirable and undemanding outposts of privilege.

The provision of prestigious sinecures was not, however, the primary function of the heir-apparent's organization. Behind it lay a very serious attempt to provide the future ruler with the experience of presiding over an independent establishment. He was given the guidance and the advice of experienced and trusted officials, and was familiarized with something of the constant formality and routine ceremonial that would surround his every action after he came to the throne. It also gave an opportunity for at least some members of the bureaucracy to get the feel of the young man who would one day become their master. Some future emperors formed long-lasting associations with the officials who had been their preceptors or members of their household establishment while they were heirs-apparent, and such advisors could exert a lasting influence on the politics of their "pupil's" reign.⁵⁵

These well-intentioned and carefully considered measures to provide imperial heirs with a suitable training to fit them for their future responsibilities were, however, to a large measure thwarted by the remarkable instability of the succession from Kao-tsu's 高祖 reign (618-26) to that of Hsüan-tsung, and again in the ninth century, by the manipulation of the succession by eunuch factions within the palace.

SUCCESSION PROBLEMS IN THE EARLY-T'ANG PERIOD

In spite of all these precautions, for a century or more the succession remained far from secure. Kao-tsu's own successor had been fixed even before the foundation of the dynasty, when at the very end of 617 his eldest son Li Chien-ch'eng 李建成 was appointed heir to his fief of T'ang by the Sui emperor Yang-ti 楊帝.⁵⁶ Kao-tsu confirmed this choice of heir after assuming the throne in 618, when he formally installed Chien-ch'eng as heir-apparent.⁵⁷ But this arrangement was shattered when bitter rivalry between Chien-ch'eng and his younger brother Shih-min 世民 (the future T'ai-tsung) culminated in 626 in the Hsüan-wu Gate incident. Shih-min

⁵¹ E. g., Su-tsung was heir-apparent for 18 years, Te-tsung for 15, and Shun-tsung 26.

⁵² *THY* 67, p. 1169.

⁵³ On this case, see Denis Twitchett, "The Seamy Side of Late T'ang Political Life: Yü Ti and His Family," *AM* 3d ser. 1.2 (1988), pp. 29-63.

⁵⁴ *THY* 67, p. 1169.

⁵⁵ In 642 T'ai-tsung already foresaw that such deep personal associations could become a political problem, and put a limit of four years on the term for which an official might serve on the staff of any of the princes; see *CKCY* 4, p. 116.

⁵⁶ *CTS* 1, p. 4, which gives the cyclical date *chia-tzu*; *TCTC* 184, p. 5765 gives the date as *chi-su*.

⁵⁷ *CTS* 1, p. 7; *IFYK* 257, p. 1a; *TCTC* 185, p. 5795, dates it July 4, 618.

murdered the heir-apparent and another of his brothers, and after first being declared Kao-tsu's heir-apparent subsequently usurped the throne, accepting Kao-tsu's abdication in his favor, and leaving his father as retired emperor.⁵⁸

Two months after his own enthronement in 626, T'ai-tsung installed his eldest son Li Ch'eng-ch'ien 承乾 as heir-apparent.⁵⁹ Still an eight-year-old child, at first he gave a very good impression, and whenever T'ai-tsung was traveling away from the capital he was left in charge, of course under the close supervision of well-chosen ministers, and conducted business seriously. But as he grew older the prince gave cause for grave doubts over his health and about his fitness to rule.⁶⁰ For all his serious demeanor in public, in his private life he was devoted to sensual pleasures, and this became public knowledge. T'ai-tsung began to show unusual favors to his son Li T'ai, prince of Wei 魏王李泰, who formed the ambition of replacing Li Ch'eng-ch'ien as the imperial heir. The extraordinary favors shown by the emperor to Li T'ai met with protests from his senior advisers, who foresaw trouble between the two princes. But the heir-apparent's indiscretions continued. He developed a homosexual passion for a young palace entertainer. The emperor heard of this liaison and was infuriated, had the prince's lover killed, and several members of the prince's entourage were executed. The heir-apparent believed that Li T'ai had denounced him and this further embittered the relationship between the brothers. The heir-apparent now began to encourage members of his household to indulge in violent behavior and became besotted with Turkish customs, dressing in Turkish costume and speaking Turkish. In 643 he recruited a group of desperados

and plotted to murder Li T'ai. But one of his fellow plotters was arrested for involvement in another abortive rising led by the heir-apparent's younger brother, Li Yu, prince of Ch'i 齊王李祐, and under interrogation revealed the plot to kill Li T'ai. The heir-apparent was stripped of his titles and exiled to the wild frontier district of Ch'ien-chou 黔州 (now in Kweichow),⁶¹ where he died at the end of 644. His erstwhile rival Li T'ai was secluded in the Northern Park,⁶² and then demoted.⁶³

After Ch'eng-ch'ien's dismissal as heir a bitter court dispute broke out over which prince should replace him, with T'ai-tsung and his ministers backing rival candidates. T'ai-tsung's ninth son Li Chih, prince of Chin 晉王李治 (the future Kao-tsung), was finally agreed upon and installed as heir-apparent, and the emperor began to devote serious personal attention to his preparation for ruling the empire. But the factional alignments that had arisen from the dispute over the succession remained, and continued to divide the highest levels of the bureaucracy for some years after Kao-tsung's accession in 649.

During Kao-tsung's long reign (649-683) there were far more serious problems. Kao-tsung's original empress née Wang was barren, and his first heir-apparent, Li Chung 李忠, installed in 652, was his son by a secondary consort. When the emperor's new favorite Wu Chao 武曌 (the future empress Wu) brought about the dethronement and death of empress Wang and was herself installed as empress in 656, she was determined that the succession should go to one of her own children, so that the next emperor, like her own sickly husband, should remain firmly under her thumb. As soon as she became empress, Li Chung was demoted to be prince of Liang 梁王 and sent away from the capital, first to be governor-general of Liang-chou 梁州 and then to be prefect of Fang-chou 房州 (in modern Hupei). He lived in fear of his life, sometimes wearing women's clothes to escape imaginary assassins. Later, in 660, he was accused of making political prophecies based on his dreams, and further reduced to commoner status. He was banished to Ch'ien-chou, where he was imprisoned in the former residence of T'ai-tsung's demoted heir-apparent Li Ch'eng-ch'ien. In 664 he was falsely accused of plotting sedition with Shang-kuan I 上

⁵⁸ Andrew Eisenberg, "Kingship, Power and the Hsüan-wu Men Incident of the T'ang," *TP* 80 (1994), pp. 223-59, puts forward the novel idea that Kao-tsu stayed aloof and deliberately left his sons to compete for the throne so that he himself could become retired emperor with the comfortable knowledge that the best, or at least the most ruthless, among his sons would succeed him. Although he adduces interesting evidence about the politics of Kao-tsu's reign, there is, unfortunately, no positive proof that Kao-tsu ever entertained such an idea.

⁵⁹ The chronology of these events was as follows: the Hsüan-wu Gate coup occurred July 2, 626; T'ai-tsung was appointed heir-apparent July 5; Kao-tsu abdicated in his favor on Sept. 3; and T'ai-tsung ascended the throne the day after. His heir-apparent Li Ch'eng-ch'ien, prince of Chung-shan, then eight years of age, was installed sixty days later - on Nov. 2; see *CTS* 2, pp. 30-31; *TCTC* 191, p. 6017; 192, p. 6024; *THY* 1, p. 2. Throughout the T'ang period it remained a normal practice, when a succession was in some degree irregular or unexpected, that the succeeding emperor be briefly appointed heir-apparent before actually ascending the throne.

⁶⁰ *THY* 50, p. 869, contains an edict dated 631 ordering a Taoist adept called Ch'in Ying to offer prayers for the cure of the heir-apparent's illness.

⁶¹ *TFYK* 257, p. 2a; *TTCLC* 31, p. 121; *TCTC* 197, p. 6193.

⁶² See edict in *TFYK* 257, p. 4b; *TCTC* 197, p. 6196.

⁶³ *CTS* 3, p. 55; *CTS* 76, p. 2655; *TFYK* 297, p. 27a; *TTCLC* 39, p. 179.

官儀 and the eunuch Wang Fu-sheng 王伏勝, and was ordered to commit suicide.⁶⁴

Kao-tsung's remaining sons by other palace ladies were also removed from the scene. His second son, Li Hsiao, prince of Yüan 原王李孝, was banished to provincial posts. In 652 he was made governor-general of T'ai-yüan 太原, Ping-chou 并州, and prefect of Sui-chou 遂州 in 658. He too died in 664.⁶⁵ The third son, Li Shang-chin, prince of Tse 澤王李上金, and the fourth son, Li Su-chieh, prince of Hsü 徐王李素節, also spent the years after empress Wu's rise to power banished to provincial posts well away from the capital. Finally, in 690 Wu Ch'eng-ssu 武承嗣 had the inquisitor Chou Hsing 周興 accuse them of plotting rebellion. They were brought to Lo-yang 洛陽, where Su-chieh was immediately murdered and Shang-chin hanged himself.⁶⁶

With the other princes safely out of the way, in 656 Chung was replaced as heir-apparent by the empress Wu's own three-year-old eldest son Li Hung 李弘, who, as he grew to manhood, promised to become a great emperor. But in 675 he died suddenly of poison during a visit to the Ho-pi Palace in Lo-yang. He was posthumously given the imperial title of Hsiao-ching Huang-ti 孝敬皇帝 and a mausoleum was built for him, as if he had actually reigned as emperor. Many people believed that he was poisoned at empress Wu's orders, because prior to his death he had been showing opposition to her and to her policies.⁶⁷

He was replaced as heir-apparent by her second son Li Hsien 賢. He was the most talented of Kao-tsung's sons, a considerable scholar and a great favorite of his father. When the emperor fell seriously ill in 679 he was made temporary regent and carried out his duties forcefully and decisively. Empress Wu feared that he too might become a potent threat to her own authority, and in 680 he was demoted to commoner status and banished on a blatantly trumped-up charge of treason,⁶⁸ whereupon late in 680 her third son Li Che 哲 (originally named Li Hsien 顯, the future Chung-tsung 中宗; r. 684, 705-10) became heir.

On Kao-tsung's death Li Hsien, the fourth designated heir-apparent, succeeded to the throne, with the newly titled empress-dowager (*huang tai-hou* 皇太后) Wu making all governmental decisions.⁶⁹ Kao-tsung died on December 28, 683, and Chung-tsung's enthronement was delayed until January 3, 684. His consort Wei was installed as empress on January 23. On February 26, alarmed by Chung-tsung's wishing to appoint the new empress's father as president of the Chancellery, empress Wu had some of her ministers and generals lead troops into the audience hall, proclaim the emperor's deposition, and drag him off to imprisonment and banishment.⁷⁰ His reign had lasted fifty-five days.

On the next day he was replaced on the throne by his twenty-two-year-old younger brother Li Tan, prince of Yü 預王李旦, the empress's fourth and youngest son, as Jui-tsung.⁷¹ Although the empress-dowager was completely in control, and the young emperor was settled in a separate hall in the palace, the outward forms of sovereignty were followed. The emperor's consort Lady Liu 柳妃 was enthroned as empress, and his eldest son Li Ch'eng-ch'i 成器 was installed as heir-apparent.⁷² Still unsatisfied by her indirect authority, empress Wu dethroned Jui-tsung in 690, arranged her own enthronement as sovereign, and founded a new dynasty, the Chou 周.

The Chinese imperial system had never envisaged a female sovereign, and because all the empress's children were by birth members of the T'ang royal family of Li it proved impossible to devise a way for the succession to remain within the Wu family so as to perpetuate a new dynasty. Jui-tsung had never abdicated when the empress seized the throne, but was appointed the "imperial successor" (*huang-ssu* 皇嗣), although his surname was

⁶⁴ *TCTC* 203, pp. 6416-17.

⁶⁵ See *TCTC* 203, pp. 6417-18. The former emperor Chung-tsung was demoted to prince of Lu-ling on Feb. 26, 684. His empress was demoted to consort (*fei*). His eldest son, Li Ch'ung-jun, who had been appointed imperial grandson in 682 (see *CTS* 5, p. 109), was reduced to commoner status on March 10 (*CTS* 6, p. 116). After Jui-tsung's accession, the former emperor was banished, first to Chün-chou and subsequently to Fang-ling, in northeast Hupei (*CTS* 7, p. 135).

⁷¹ *TCTC* 203, p. 6418; *CTS* 6, p. 116; *CTS* 7, p. 152.

⁷² See n. 1, above. Chung-tsung was dethroned on Feb. 26, 684. Jui-tsung was made emperor and his consort made empress on the 27th; *TCTC* 203, p. 6418; *CTS* 6, p. 116. His five-year-old eldest son was probably appointed heir-apparent on April 20. *TCTC* 203 gives the cyclical date *jen-tzu* of the second lunar mo., but there was no such day. The next *jen-tzu* day was in the fourth month. *CTS* 6 does not record the event, and Li Ch'eng-ch'i's biog. at *CTS* 95, p. 3009, gives only the year 684.

⁶⁴ *CTS* 4, p. 86; *CTS* 86, pp. 2823-25; *HTS* 81, p. 3586. ⁶⁵ *CTS* 86, p. 2825; *HTS* 81, p. 3586.

⁶⁶ *CTS* 86, pp. 2825-27; *HTS* 81, pp. 3586-88.

⁶⁷ He was Kao-tsung's fifth son, his eldest by empress Wu; see biogs. *CTS* 86, pp. 2828-31; *HTS* 81, pp. 3588-90; also *TCTC* 202, p. 6377.

⁶⁸ *TCTC* 202, pp. 6397-98; *CTS* 86, pp. 2831-32; *HTS* 81, pp. 3590-91.

changed to Wu, and his childhood personal name of Lun 輪 was restored. He resided in the heir-apparent's Eastern Palace, and was treated with all the ceremony due to an heir-apparent.⁷³

Eventually in 698, deteriorating political circumstances forced the empress to make sweeping changes. The deposed former emperor Chung-tsung was summoned back to the court in Lo-yang from banishment on the pretext that he required medical treatment. His brother Jui-tsung ceded his position as imperial successor to him,⁷⁴ and he was once again appointed heir-apparent, thus ensuring that the throne would revert to the royal house of Li after the empress's death. When in 705 she was finally dethroned by a coup d'état, Chung-tsung automatically resumed the throne.⁷⁵

In 706 Chung-tsung's third son, Li Ch'ung-chün 重俊, was appointed heir-apparent.⁷⁶ However, although the old empress was dead, the Wu family had not been eliminated from power. Her nephew Wu San-ssu 武三思, rumoured to be the new empress Wei's 韋皇后 lover, quickly engineered the downfall of the leaders of the coup that had overthrown the empress Wu, and in 705 married his own son to empress Wei's daughter,

⁷³ CTS 7, p. 152.

⁷⁴ He was given the title prince of Hsiang 相王 and given command of the new heir's Right Guard. In 702 he was appointed minister of education, but resigned in 703. Later that year he was made governor of Yung-chou (Ch'ang-an); CTS 6, pp. 130-31; CTS 7, p. 152.

⁷⁵ On these issues, see R. W. L. Guisso, *Wu Tse-t'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in Tang China* (Bellingham, Wash.: Western Washington U., 1978), esp. pp. 126-28.

⁷⁶ Li Ch'ung-chün's biogs. are CTS 86, pp. 2837-39; HTS 81, p. 3595. Chung-tsung had four sons in all. The oldest, and the only one born to empress Wei, was Li Ch'ung-jun 重潤 (biogs. CTS 86, p. 2835; HTS 81, p. 3593), a particular favorite of Kao-tsung, who created for him the post of imperial grandson. When Chung-tsung was dethroned by empress Wu in 683, he was reduced to commoner status and separately imprisoned. When his father Chung-tsung was brought back to Lo-yang and reinstated as heir-apparent, he was re-entitled, but in 701 he and his sister the princess Yung-t'ai 永泰公主 were accused of criticizing the empress's favorites, the Chang brothers, and were immediately executed.

The second son, by an unnamed palace lady, was Li Ch'ung-fu, prince of Ch'iao 譙王李重福, in 704 (biogs. CTS 86, pp. 2835-37; HTS 81, p. 3594). After Chung-tsung's accession the empress Wei accused him of having colluded with the Chang brothers to frame her son Ch'ung-jun and thus cause his death. He was banished to a nominal post in Chün-chou 均州, in what is now northeast Hu-peì, and detained there even though imperial amnesties permitted other banished officials to return to the capital. On the grounds of seniority he still had the best claim to the succession, and when in 710 empress Wei seized power, one of her first acts was to send 500 troops to Chün-chou to apprehend him. But she herself fell from power a few days later, and the newly enthroned Jui-tsung conferred the post of prefect of Chi-chou 樂州 upon Ch'ung-fu. But he was already embroiled in a rebellion of his own, and had gone to Lo-yang to try to seize the throne. The plot was a fiasco, and ended in Ch'ung-fu's suicide and the public exposure of his corpse.

princess An-lo 安樂公主. He then began scheming to have the princess appointed as heir-apparent. Although this totally unprecedented plan to settle the succession on a woman was temporarily blocked, the empress Wei and Wu San-ssu revived it in the next year. Ch'ung-chün, in self-preservation, then attempted an armed coup, in which Wu San-ssu and his son the consort of princess An-lo were killed, but which ultimately failed and led to his own death.

Chung-tsung himself, empress Wei, and the princess An-lo survived, and there was renewed speculation that empress Wei intended to appoint An-lo as imperial heir. However, the post of heir-apparent was allowed to remain unfilled. Only one of Chung-tsung's sons remained at court, his fourth son Li Ch'ung-mao, prince of Wen 溫王李重茂.⁷⁷

In 710 Chung-tsung's brief reign ended in his murder by empress Wei, who with her daughter princess An-lo had presided over five years of misrule and utter corruption and who now tried to seize power for herself, as empress Wu had done. She enthroned the sixteen-year-old Li Ch'ung-mao as "Wen-wang 溫王" and had herself appointed dowager-empress, planning to overthrow the T'ang and set up a new dynasty. Her regime was doomed from the outset, and lasted only two weeks before a counter-coup was mounted, led by the third son of Jui-tsung, Li Lung-chi 隆基 (the future Hsüan-tsung). The empress, with many of her own family and partisans, and princess An-lo were killed, and the child-emperor was forced to abdicate in favor of his uncle, Chung-tsung's younger brother, the former emperor Jui-tsung, who ascended the throne once again.⁷⁸

Jui-tsung was a reluctant ruler, who had survived under empress Wu's dominance by keeping a low profile and withdrawing from involvement in public affairs. The stability of the dynasty was still seriously threatened, however, by the bitter rivalry between the new emperor's ambitious sister the princess T'ai-p'ing 太平公主 and his third son Li Lung-chi, who had been designated heir-apparent only three days after Jui-tsung ascended the throne on July 25, 710. After two years of dissension, Jui-tsung had had enough, and in September of 712 he abdicated in favor of Li Lung-chi, but under an unwieldy compromise arrangement that left himself as retired

⁷⁷ Biog. at CTS 86, p. 2839.

⁷⁸ TCTC 209, p. 6643; CTS 51, pp. 2171-75; HTS 76, pp. 3486-87. On these events, see Denis Twitchett, ed., *Sui and Tang China (589-906), Part 1*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1979), pp. 326-28, 335-341.

emperor (*t'ai-shang-huang* 太上皇), holding court every fifth day and retaining powers over senior appointments and the most important administrative decisions. The emperor, moreover, still constantly deferred to the opinions of his formidable sister the T'ai-p'ing princess, who continued her intrigues unabated and consolidated support among the court officials.

Eventually, in the summer of 713 events reached a crisis. The princess prepared a conspiracy to murder Li Lung-chi and seize power for herself. Li Lung-chi learned of her plans and carried out a successful preemptive strike against the conspirators; the princess was ordered to commit suicide on July 29, 713. The next day Jui-tung formally divested himself of his remaining powers, and Hsüan-tung became emperor in reality.⁷⁹

Until Hsüan-tung became full emperor and dynastic stability was finally restored, the succession had thus been repeatedly threatened. In the preceding decade alone the empress Wu had been dethroned and her dynasty brought to an end; Chung-tung had been murdered by his empress Wei, who had aimed to set up a dynasty of her own; the same empress had previously tried to have a daughter appointed heir-apparent; there had been attempts to seize the throne first by Chung-tung's heir-apparent, and then by another royal prince; there had been a plot to seize power by a royal princess; and Hsüan-tung had himself led two armed interventions to restore stability. Until this time no eldest son, duly installed as heir-apparent at the beginning of his father's reign, had yet succeeded to the T'ang throne. These disturbances of the system laid down in the dynasty's statutes had mostly been the result of intrigues by a succession of powerful and ambitious women of the imperial household attempting to entrench themselves and their own influential families in power, taking advantage of a succession of weak-willed emperors.

Changes under Hsüan-tung

Hsüan-tung lost little time in installing his own heir-apparent. In 715 his second son Li Ssu-ch'ien, prince of Ying 郢王李嗣謙, was installed as heir-apparent, the event being marked by an amnesty and three days of public celebration. In 719 the court celebrated both his coming to maturity (*yüan-fu* 元服) and the *ch'ih-chou* 齒青 ceremony, when he first attended

lectures in the State Academy Directorate (Kuo-tzu chien 國子監). In 725 he was married to a consort of the surname Hsüeh 薛氏, a ceremony accompanied by a local Act of Grace 曲赦 in the capital.

At last the arrangements for the succession appeared to be proceeding according to the rules. However, palace politics soon interfered yet again. In 720 the emperor's younger brother Li Fan 範 was involved in a palace plot together with a brother-in-law who was the consort of a royal princess. As a result strict limits were placed on the social contacts of royal princes and princesses, and the emperor's two elder brothers were recalled to the capital from their posts in the provinces. In 725 a similar plot involving the emperor's youngest brother Li Yeh 業 and his in-laws was uncovered.

More serious was the position of the empress Wang 王皇后, who had been installed in 712, but who was still childless. Before his accession to the throne Hsüan-tung had already had sons by a number of consorts. His designated heir-apparent was the son of his secondary consort Chao Li-fei 趙麗妃, a talented musician and dancer who had become the future emperor's favorite while he was vice-prefect of Lu-chou 潞州 (708-10). The son was probably born in 709 and first enfeoffed as a commandery prince in 710. After Hsüan-tung's first years Chao Li-fei, like several of his other consorts, gradually lost the emperor's affections. She died in 726. In Hsüan-tung's early years on the throne his two principal favorites were the *kuei-pin* lady Yang 楊貴嬪, the mother of the future Su-tung (see below), who also died early in his reign, and Wu Hui-fei 武惠妃, who bore him four sons and three daughters. In 724 the empress Wang, desperate to conceive a son, was found to have consulted a monk to perform magic ceremonies to ensure a child, was degraded to commoner status, and died shortly after.

The emperor wished to appoint lady Wu as empress, but the court objected that she was a descendant of the family of empress Wu, and that since she was not the mother of the heir-apparent but had sons of her own, her promotion might imperil the succession. She was thus not enthroned empress, but installed as *hui-fei*, although with the sort of ceremonies appropriate to an empress.⁸⁰

The objectors' arguments proved all too accurate. In 736, amid much

⁷⁹ On these complex events, see Howard S. Levy, "How a Prince Became Emperor: The Accession of Hsüan-tung (713-755)," *Sinologica* 6 (1958), pp. 101-21; Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History* 3, pp. 335-45, and the sources given there, esp. *TC* 210, pp. 6681-85.

⁸⁰ Wu Hui-fei's biogs. are *CTS* 51, pp. 2177-78; *HTS* 76, pp. 3491-92. See also Howard S. Levy, "Wu Hui-fei, A Favoured Consort of T'ang Hsüan-tung," *TP* 46.1-2 (1958), pp. 49-80, which includes an excellent genealogical chart of the Wu clan.

court intrigue, Wu Hui-fei claimed that the heir-apparent and other royal princes were planning to kill both herself and her son Li Mao, prince of Shou 壽王李瑁. Hsüan-tsung dismissed these charges. But next year the claims were renewed by Yang Hui 楊洄, the consort of one of Wu Hui-fei's daughters. The heir-apparent, together with his brother-in-law Hsüeh Hsiu 薛繡, the consort of the princess T'ang-ch'ang 唐昌公主, Li Yao, prince of E 鄂王李瑤, and Li Chü, prince of Kuang 光王李琚, the emperor's fifth and eighth sons, respectively, were reduced to commoner status and then ordered to commit suicide. Wu Hui-fei herself died at the end of 737, and was posthumously granted the title of empress.

There was now neither empress nor heir-apparent, and the position of heir remained vacant for more than a year. The emperor refused to appoint Wu Hui-fei's son Li Mao, as she had hoped, and eventually decided that the succession should go to Li Yü, prince of Chung 忠王李璵 (the future Su-tsung 肅宗; r. 756-62), his third son by the deceased lady Yang, whose claim to seniority was secure. (His personal name was changed to Heng 亨 in 744.) Hsüan-tsung's eldest son, Li Ts'ung 琮, was not considered because he was childless. After this, in spite of the dominance of the aging emperor by his favorite consort Yang Kuei-fei 楊貴妃, no change was made in the succession, and Li Yü/Heng eventually succeeded to the throne.

Li Heng came to the throne as a man of twenty-nine, better prepared to rule than any of his predecessors, after having served uninterruptedly as heir-apparent for eighteen years. He did not, however, succeed to the throne in the normal fashion, on the death of his father. In 756 An Lu-shan's rebel army had taken Ch'ang-an, and Hsüan-tsung decided to flee and take refuge in Szechwan. On the road the heir-apparent parted company with him, deciding to retreat to the northwest, rally the imperial forces, and continue to resist the rebels. Within a few days Li Heng had been persuaded to usurp the throne. To satisfy propriety the old emperor went through the motions of abdicating in his favor, and was appointed retired emperor (*shang-huang t'ien-ti* 上皇天帝). In 757, after Su-tsung's forces had recaptured the two capitals from the rebels, the former Hsüan-tsung was returned to Ch'ang-an and allowed to reside in Hsing-ch'ing Palace, which he had had constructed more than thirty years before. Later, in 760, Su-tsung began to fear that the old emperor still retained the loyalty of many of his subjects, and might become the focus of dissidence. He was moved into Ta-ming Palace, where he lived until his death on May 3, 762.

Su-tsung was himself already mortally ill, and survived his father by only eleven days. His son Li Yü 預 (the future Tai-tsung 代宗; r. 762-79) had been designated heir-apparent in 758, and he was appointed regent immediately after Hsüan-tsung's death because Su-tsung was already incapacitated. Su-tsung's empress Chang had opposed his appointment as heir-apparent and had wished to have one of her own sons installed to replace him as heir. Now she attempted to have one of her sons murder the heir-apparent in the palace. However, the plot was thwarted by Su-tsung's chief eunuchs Li Fu-kuo 輔國 and Ch'eng Yüan-ch'en 程元振. The empress and two of the dissident princes were executed, and Li Yü was enthroned on May 18, 762.

The succession subsequently became more a matter of routine. Only one T'ang emperor after Su-tsung ever appointed an empress, and she died on the same day as her installation.⁸¹ Much of the former instability had been the result of palace intrigues led by a series of ambitious and unscrupulous women, all of whom had close ties both with their own politically dominant families and with other influential aristocratic groups at the capital. Henceforth the emperor's principal wife was appointed only as a consort (*fei*). However, after an emperor died the most favored of his consorts would be appointed empress-dowager. Chief among these would be the mother of the new emperor, whose elevation helped to firmly establish his claims to the legitimate succession. During the ninth century, when several short-lived emperors followed one another, there were at times as many as three empresses-dowager or grand empresses-dowager living simultaneously in different palaces or halls. They were not politically neutral but interfered in succession disputes and meddled in other aspects of politics. But, formidable old ladies as they undoubtedly were, they no longer had the unquestioned authority of an active empress or the capacity to do mischief of their predecessors.

The other royal princes too ceased to be dangerous rivals; confined since 725 to the princely residences (see below, under "The Royal Princes") and denied the opportunity to hold office, they no longer had either the

⁸¹ Te-tsung did arrange to install his favorite consort, Wang Shu-fei 王淑妃, the mother of his heir-apparent (the future Shun-tsung), as empress in 786. The brevet of appointment was issued Dec. 3. However, the empress had already been sick for a long period, and died on the fifth, just as the rites conferring the title of empress were completed; *CTS* 12, p. 355; *TCYC* 232, p. 7474; *CIS* 52, pp. 2193-94; *HTS* 77, p. 3502 (*HTS* incorrectly dates this event to 787).

status, the independence, or the wealth that their predecessors had enjoyed in the seventh and early-eighth centuries.

For almost half a century the throne passed uneventfully to the eldest son of each deceased emperor, after he had served an apprenticeship as heir-apparent. This period in waiting had lasted for fifteen years in the case of Te-tsung 德宗, twenty-five years in the case of Shun-tsung 順宗. The accession of Shun-tsung, February 28, 805, however, broke this pattern. Shun-tsung came to the throne already a very sick man. Since the preceding autumn he had lost the power of speech. His condition deteriorated, and, incapable of ruling, he was forced to abdicate in favor of Li Ch'un 純 (r. Hsien-tsung 憲宗, 805-20), the eldest of his twenty-three sons, who had been installed as heir-apparent on May 8. On August 26 the heir was appointed regent, and Shun-tsung's formal abdication followed on September 4. He retained the title of retired emperor, and his residence was moved to Hsing-ch'ing Palace, where he died February 11, 806.

THE SUCCESSION AND THE EUNUCHS AFTER 805

The persons who engineered Shun-tsung's abdication were a group of high-ranking eunuchs, allied with a number of powerful provincial governors. The eunuchs, whose power was in the ascendant in every field of government from this time onwards, controlled the succession, just as they controlled the royal palaces and the residences of the royal princes, whose household establishments survived in name only.

Hsien-tsung died in mysterious circumstances in 820, said to have been the result of poison administered by a eunuch, but more likely killed by the highly toxic "elixirs" prepared by his alchemists. The heir-apparent,⁸² his third son Li Heng 恆 (Mu-tsung), succeeded him.⁸³ From this time on eunuchs were involved in every T'ang succession, and in every dispute about the succession. Every successful candidate for the throne was enthroned with the backing of the palace consuls (*hu-chün chung-wei* 護軍中尉), the supreme commanders of the eunuch-led Palace Armies of Inspired Strategy (Shen-ts'e chün 神策軍).⁸⁴

⁸² Hsien-tsung had appointed his eldest son Li Ning, prince of Teng 鄧王李寧, as heir-apparent in 809, but he died in 811. His third son, prince of Sui 李 李恆 (the future Mu-tsung), was appointed heir-apparent in his place in 812.

⁸³ *CTS* 15, pp. 471-72; *CTS* 16, p. 475; *TCTC* 241, pp. 7776-77.

⁸⁴ See Liu Yat-wing "The Shen-ts'e Armies and the Palace Commissions in China,

Mu-tsung was incapacitated in a polo match in 822,⁸⁵ after which he was completely dominated by the eunuchs and died prematurely in 824.⁸⁶ He was succeeded by his eldest son Li Chan, prince of Ching 景王李湛 (r. Ching-tsung 敬宗, 824-27), who had been hastily created heir-apparent after the accident.⁸⁷

Ching-tsung's accession at the age of fifteen was a dynastic disaster. He was quite unfit to rule, and his irresponsible and unpredictable behavior led to his murder by a group of eunuchs in 827 during a wild night of debauchery and carousal. He was still only eighteen, and, although he left five infant sons,⁸⁸ they could not be enthroned. Until Ching-tsung, the succession had remained in the direct line from father to eldest son since Su-tsung's time. There now followed two decades of confused and disputed successions.

The most powerful eunuchs of the time, Wang Shou-ch'eng 王守澄 and Liang Shou-chien 梁守謙, enthroned his younger brother Li Ang 昂 (r. Wen-tsung 文宗, 827-40), after a bitter struggle between three rival cliques of eunuchs backing the claims of different royal princes.⁸⁹ Wen-tsung was a far more serious ruler than his two pleasure-loving predecessors. But he proved weak and indecisive, and his reign was marred by constant and bitter factional wrangling both among factions of courtiers and ministers

755-875 AD" (Ph.D. diss., London University, 1970). The evidence on the various late-T'ang successions is tabulated on pp. 273-76. I adopt Dr. Liu's translation of "*hu-chün chung-wei*" as "Palace Consul," in preference to Hucker's "Chief Palace Commandant-Protector."

⁸⁵ *CTS* 16, p. 501; *TCTC* 242, pp. 7822-23. On this incident, see James T. C. Liu, "Polo and Cultural Change: From T'ang to Sung China," *HJAS* 45.1 (1985), pp. 203-24.

⁸⁶ *CTS* 16, p. 504; *CTS* 17A, p. 507; *TCTC* 243, pp. 7830-31. The emperor's death was not due to his injuries. By the New Year of 824, he was fit enough to preside over the court according to the normal ceremonial. But the emperor had begun ingesting mineral drugs. A recluse named Chang Kao 張舉 sent in a memorial strongly criticizing him for repeating his father's fatal error. Mu-tsung appreciated his advice and tried to summon him to the court, but he could not be found. The emperor's illness recurred on Feb. 23, and he died two days later. See *CTS* 171, pp. 4449-50, for Chang Kao's memorial. See also Joseph Needham and Ho Ping-yü, "Elixir Poisoning in Medieval China," *Janus* 48 (1959), pp. 221-51; rpt. in Joseph Needham, *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1970), pp. 318-19.

⁸⁷ *TCTC* 242, pp. 7822-23; *TFYK* 257, pp. 15a-17a.

⁸⁸ *CTS* 175, pp. 4538-40; *HTS* 82, p. 3632; *HTS* 70B, pp. 2170-71; and *THY* 5, p. 54. *THY* omits the eldest son Li P'u, prince of Chin 晉王李普, a special favorite of his uncle Wen-tsung, who intended to make him his own heir. But he died in 828, aged five, after which he was posthumously entitled the Tao-huai heir-apparent 悼懷太子 ("The Lamented Heir-Apparent").

⁸⁹ *CTS* 17A, pp. 522-23; *TCTC* 243, pp. 7851-53. Wen-tsung was Mu-tsung's second son, and Ching-tsung's younger brother.

and among rival groups of eunuchs. Things were made worse by two ill-conceived and incompetently executed attempts to curb or eliminate the power of the eunuchs, which had disastrous results for the civil bureaucracy. In 832 he appointed the elder of his two sons, Li Yung, prince of Lu 魯王李永, as heir-apparent, but he proved to be frivolous and dissolute.⁹⁰ In 838 his mother, Wang Te-fei 王德妃, who had fallen out of favor with Wen-tsung and quarrelled with Yang Hsien-fei 楊賢妃, the influential former consort of Mu-tsung, died. The emperor called a conference of his ministers, which advocated removing the heir-apparent. The indecisive emperor took no action, but shortly afterwards the heir-apparent met a violent death in circumstances that were carefully hushed up, although the case led to the execution or banishment of several dozen eunuchs and officials.⁹¹

In the winter of 839 the emperor was pressed to appoint a new heir-apparent. Mu-tsung's former consort Yang Hsien-fei pushed the claims of her own son Li Jung, prince of An 安王李溶,⁹² but she was a relative of the powerful minister Yang Ssu-fu 楊嗣復, and the prince's appointment was strongly opposed for political reasons. Wen-tsung therefore issued an edict announcing that the new heir should be Li Ch'eng-mei, prince of Ch'en 陳王李成美, the fifth son of Ching-tsung.⁹³ Ch'eng-mei was never, however, formally installed, and on February 8, 840, another edict appointed yet another of Mu-tsung's sons, Li Ch'an, prince of Ying 穎王李瀼 (the future Wu-tsung 武宗; r. 840-46), who was secretly summoned from obscurity in the Residence of the Sixteen Princes to be heir-apparent and regent. Two days later Wen-tsung was dead, and the prince of Ying ascended the throne. The succession had been stage-managed and the testamentary edict appointing the prince of Ying had been forged by the all-powerful eunuch consuls Ch'iu Shih-liang 仇士良 and Yü Hung-chih 魚弘志.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *TFYK* 257, pp. 16b-17a; *TCTC* 244, p. 7880. The long delay in appointing an heir was the result of Wen-tsung's disappointment over the death in infancy of Li P'u, prince of Chin, the eldest son of Ching-tsung whom he had loved as if he were his own son and wished to designate as his successor.

⁹¹ *CTS* 17B, p. 575; *CTS* 175, pp. 4540-42; *HTS* 82, p. 3634; *TCTC* 246, pp. 7935-36.

⁹² *CTS* 175, p. 4538; *HTS* 82, p. 3632; and *TCTC* 246, p. 7941. *CTS* 175 says that he was Mu-tsung's eighth son, but this is inconsistent with the fact that earlier (p. 4536) the same text says that Mu-tsung had only five sons, a number confirmed by *HTS* 82, p. 3630.

⁹³ *CTS* 175, pp. 4539-40; *HTS* 82, p. 3632; *TFYK* 257, pp. 17b-18a.

⁹⁴ The testamentary edict is at *TFYK* 11, p. 15b; *TCLC* 12, pp. 70-71; *WYH* 73, p. 15a; and *CTS* 18A, p. 584.

No emperor after Wen-tsung ever appointed an heir-apparent before he was himself on the brink of death, and it is probable that in some cases they had no hand in the testamentary edicts in which their successors were named, but that these were written while the emperor was on his death bed, or even written after his death, by the eunuchs who manipulated the succession.

After Wu-tsung's death, on April 22, 846, the unexpected appointment at the age of thirty-five of Li I, prince of Kuang 光王李怡 (renamed Ch'en 忱; r. Hsuan-tsung 宣宗, 846-59), which resulted from a conference of eunuchs held in the Imperial Park, made a complete break with the pattern of succession, for he was a younger brother of Mu-tsung, the thirteenth son of Hsien-tsung, and thus a member of the generation senior to the last three emperors. He was named as imperial uncle (*huang t'ai-shu* 皇太叔) and provisional regent (*ch'üan kou-tang chün-kuo cheng-shih* 權勾當軍國政事) in a testamentary edict issued the day before Wu-tsung's death.⁹⁵

His eldest son Li Ts'ui 淮 (r. I-tsung 懿宗, 859-73) was appointed heir-apparent and regent only six days before his succession at the age of twenty-five in 859.⁹⁶ I-tsung's fifth son and successor Li Yen 儼 (now renamed Hsüan 僊; r. Hsi-tsung 僖宗, 873-88) succeeded at the age of eleven in 873 just two days after a testamentary edict named him heir-apparent and provisional regent.⁹⁷ After his death in 888 his younger brother Li Chieh 傑 (now renamed Yeh 晔; r. Chao-tsung 昭宗, 888-904) was

⁹⁵ *CTS* 18A, p. 610; *CTS* 118B, p. 613; *TFYK* 257, p. 18b; and *TCTC* 248, p. 8022. For Wu-tsung's testamentary edict, see *TCLC* 12, p. 71; and *WYH* 76, p. 13a. The choice of Hsuan-tsung was surprising not only because he was virtually unknown and had always kept out of the limelight, acting modestly and unassumingly, but also because his mother, Lady Cheng 鄭氏, who was still living, had a most unusual background. She had been a concubine of the rebel Li Ch'i 李錡, who had taken her into his harem after a fortune teller had prophesized that she would bear a future emperor. After Li Ch'i's defeat and execution in 807 she had been officially enslaved and assigned to Hsien-tsung's inner palace, where she became an attendant of his favorite consort Kuo Kuei-fei. She bore the future Hsuan-tsung in 810. *HTS* 77, p. 3505, gives this information, and also says that some people believed her original surname had been Erh-chu 爾朱, a double surname associated with the northern frontier peoples of Northern Wei times; *CTS* 52, p. 2198, says that the "old histories lack any information about where her family came from and how she entered the palace service."

⁹⁶ *CTS* 18B, p. 6454; *CTS* 19A, p. 649; *TFYK* 257, p. 18b; and *TCTC* 249, pp. 8075-76. Hsuan-tsung's testamentary edict is at *TCLC* 12, pp. 71-72; *WYH* 80, p. 17b.

⁹⁷ *CTS* 19A, p. 683; *CTS* 19B, p. 689; *TFYK* 257, p. 18b; and *TCTC* 249, pp. 8166-67. The testamentary edict is at *TCLC* 21, p. 72; *WYH* 84, p. 7a.

appointed as imperial younger brother (*huang ti* 皇弟) in a testamentary edict issued two days before he came to the throne aged twenty-one.⁹⁸

This meant that after Ching-tsung all T'ang emperors came to the throne without having spent any time as the formally designated heir-apparent, and thus lacked the institutionalized training for power provided by the statutes. Instead of spending some years at least presiding over his own court in miniature in the Eastern Palace, under the tutelage of carefully selected tutors and mentors, and perhaps having acted for short periods as temporary regent, after Mu-tsung's reign future rulers grew up along with the other imperial princes in the restrictive conditions of the Sixteen Princely Residences, which were administered by the eunuchs. Moreover the policy imposed by Hsüan-tsung, prohibiting the employment in office of royal princes of the blood and debarring them from participation in public affairs, meant that no royal prince unless he was designated heir-apparent could acquire any practical experience of administration. It is not surprising that some were irresponsible and led frivolous lives.

Several of them also suffered chronic ill-health, and a number of them, beginning with Hsien-tsung, died of poisoning as the result of ingesting highly toxic "elixirs" prepared by their alchemists.⁹⁹ The life-expectancy of emperors declined sharply in the ninth century. Every T'ang ruler down to Te-tsung survived into his fifties; Hsüan-tsung lived to be seventy-seven, the empress Wu died at eighty-two. By contrast, no T'ang emperor after Te-tsung reached the age of fifty. Of the eight emperors who followed Hsien-tsung only one, Hsüan-tsung, even survived into his forties (see table 1).

The careful provisions for grooming and providing appropriate experience for future emperors and for protecting the succession had clearly broken down completely by the 830s.

THE ROYAL PRINCES

In addition to supporting and preparing the heir-apparent, the T'ang royal house also needed to make adequate provision for the large numbers of imperial princes. It was essential to enable them to live in a style and

dignity befitting their ranks, for it was always conceivable that any one of them might become the next candidate for the succession, and it was equally important to keep them content and loyal and at the same time to limit their opportunities and capabilities of threatening the throne.

T'ai-tsung placed great stress on the importance of the members of the royal family as a reliable body of support for the emperor and for the dynasty. He believed, as did some senior officials at his court, that an administrative system in which hereditary local power was devolved on enfeoffed members of the royal family and other proven allies (the so-called *feng-chien* 封建 system) would be inherently more stable and long-lasting than the hierarchical bureaucratic system of counties and prefectures administered by career appointees of the central power. The latter system, the so-called *chün-hsien* 郡縣 system, had been established by the Sui dynasty and retained by his father Kao-tsu.

Advocacy of the *feng-chien* ideal was not an irrational espousal of an ideal system deriving from antiquity. At the time of T'ai-tsung's coup against his brothers in 626, the T'ang regime was far from securely established and the country was still recovering from the destruction and bloodshed resulting from several years of large-scale warfare; the last major rivals to the T'ang had been suppressed only two years before. The empire was still governed very loosely. At the local level a huge number of small splinter counties and prefectures (roughly three times as many as in the heyday of the Sui), had been set up ad hoc as local forces surrendered to T'ang control or were pacified. At a higher level, a network of regional branches of government (*hsing-t'ai* 行台) – essentially strategic – commanded different theatres of operations; and regional military commands (*tsung-kuan fu* 總管府) also controlled the local civil administration. It took many years before T'ai-tsung enjoyed complete control over the local administrations of his empire, and while the civilian hierarchy was steadily being extended, in some cases in areas still not fully reconciled to the T'ang victory, it was quite understandable that T'ai-tsung's preference was to command at least the strategic backbone of his empire through the indirect agency of administrations under family members.

Debate on the subject began in 627 when the reestablishment of a *feng-chien* system was suggested by Hsiao Yü 蕭瑀 (575–648), who had long experience of politics under the Sui and during Kao-tsu's reign. It was strongly opposed by the other chief ministers, but T'ai-tsung persisted with his

⁹⁸ *CTS* 20A, p. 735; *IFYK* 257, pp. 18b–19a; and *TCTC* 257, p. 8376. The testamentary edict is at *TTCLC* 12, p. 72; *WYTH* 88, p. 6a.

⁹⁹ See Needham and Ho, "Elixir Poisoning," pp. 316–39. The imperial victims were Hsien-tsung, Mu-tsung, Wu-tsung, and probably Hsüan-tsung.

advocacy of this form of government in the face of all opposition. In 631 several of the emperor's younger brothers were reenfiefed with new titles, as were seven of his sons. Later in that year an edict ordered that detailed regulations be set up for hereditary territorial fief administrations for members of the royal family and also for meritorious and sage ministers.¹⁰⁰

Beginning in 632 his surviving younger brothers were given appointments as prefects, mostly in important regional centers and in strategic cities defending Ch'ang-an. Then, early in 636, twenty-one imperial princes were reenfiefed and appointed governors-general (*tu-tu* 都督) of various major strategic prefectures, and sent out to govern them as if they were fiefs.¹⁰¹ In some cases the administrative center of their governorship was historically the same as the newly endowed fief name.¹⁰² In 637 T'ai-tsung attempted to enlarge this scheme by sending fourteen of his senior courtiers to similar regional appointments, and to make all these provincial posts, together with those held by the royal princes, hereditary. This provoked bitter opposition. The new appointees included some of the emperor's closest supporters, who looked on such provincial appointments as banishment from the center of power, and resisted strongly and vociferously. The policy was abandoned and the hereditary appointments terminated in 639.

But the policy of using royal princes as governors and prefects of a protective ring of strategic centers continued, and remained in T'ai-tsung's

mind until the end of his life, when he raised it as an issue of profound importance in his *Ti-fan* 帝範, the political testament written for his heir in 648.¹⁰³

The appointment of royal princes to prefectural posts, where they could gain experience of administration, while remaining under close supervision and at a safe distance from the court and its intrigues, continued under his successor Kao-tsung, one of whose tutors as heir-apparent had been Hsiao Yü. It continued during the nominal reigns of Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung, under the dominance of empress Wu before she usurped the throne in 690. There was a group of important prefectures that seems to have been reserved as postings for royal princes, and their positions clearly show that T'ai-tsung's vision of enfeoffed family members (*fan-ch'i* 藩戚) providing a protective hedge around the capital still remained alive. Several of T'ai-tsung's brothers and those of his sons who survived him remained in service in one prefecture after another until their deaths.¹⁰⁴ Under Kao-tsung his own brothers and uncles as well as some of his sons continued to be appointed to posts as prefects or governors-general, as were the sons of Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung.

There is no question that they did actually participate in government. Some proved model administrators, others were reprimanded by T'ai-tsung or Kao-tsung for their shortcomings. One of them, Li Yüan-hsiang, prince of Chiang 江王李元祥, Kao-tsu's twentieth son, had such a fearsome reputation for strictness with his underlings that they claimed that to be appointed to serve on his staff was worse than banishment to the outer prefectures of Ling-nan. There is evidence, too, that the princes were accompanied to their postings by their princely households, including their fief administrations. Most of the surviving princes and their immediate heirs holding provincial posts were killed or sent into penal banishment in the 680s and early 690s during the purges of empress Wu.

But although princes continued to hold prefectural posts almost to the end of the seventh century there was no further talk of making the princes' prefectural appointments hereditary. That such a plan was even contemplated, much less that an attempt was made to implement it, shows how highly T'ai-tsung valued the royal princes, and their potential importance as supporters of the dynastic regime.

¹⁰⁰ See *Cambridge History* 3, pp. 210-12.

¹⁰⁴ Of Kao-tsu's 22 sons, 16 survived his own death in 636; 15 survived the death of T'ai-tsung in 649; 5 survived the death of Kao-tsung in 683.

¹⁰⁰ *TCTC* 193, p. 6089.
¹⁰¹ *TCTC* 194, p. 6118.
¹⁰² On this policy, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven: Wei Cheng at the Court of Tang Tai-tsung* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1974), pp. 175-76; and *Cambridge History* 3, pp. 210-11. See also Robert M. Somers, "Time, Space and Structure in the Consolidation of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 617-700)," *JAS* 45.5 (1986), p. 976. Somers, who clearly grasped the significance of this policy, was incorrect, however, in his assertion that the locations assigned to royal princes are unknown. On March 4, 636, probably as a result of the death of retired emperor Kao-tsu a few months earlier, 17 princes, 10 brothers of the emperor, and 7 of his sons were promoted to grander fiefs. On March 16 six of these royal brothers and six of the emperor's sons were appointed governors-general of named major centers; see the imperial order in *CTS* 64, p. 2424. Li T'ai, the emperor's scholarly fourth son was among those appointed, but was allowed to stay at the capital and pursue his scholarly interests, while Chang Liang was deputed to perform his actual duties. The princes left for their places of duty on May 2, after an emotional send-off by T'ai-tsung; see *TCTC* 194, pp. 6118-19; *TTCLC* 35, p. 150. On Feb. 5, 637, three more of the sons of the emperor were appointed governors-general; see *TCTC* 194, p. 6125. The appointment of 21 princes including the above as hereditary prefects of their districts, and the appointment of 14 senior court statesmen as the hereditary prefects of other places, came in July 637; *TCTC* 195, p. 6130; *TTCLC* 35, pp. 149-50. The affair dragged on. The senior ministers protested bitterly to the emperor that these provincial appointments amounted to banishment, and on April 5, 639, the scheme for hereditary prefects was terminated; *CTS* 3, p. 50; *TCTC* 195, pp. 6145-46.

T'ai-tsung saw enfeoffed family members as a powerful source of protection for the throne, "as fences and screens to the dynasty." Others, perhaps more realistically, thought that they were more likely to become serious potential rivals to imperial authority entrenched hereditarily in their own semi-autonomous power-bases away from the capital.

Later in the dynasty, *feng-chien* government was from time to time discussed, but the term is then usually used more as a coded reference to the devolution of political authority, rather than as the literal granting of hereditary territorial powers to members of the royal family and other great persons that T'ai-tsung had envisaged. On the one occasion, during the An Lu-shan rising, when the policy of appointing members of the royal family to command hereditary fiefdoms was attempted, the only royal prince who actually proceeded to his fief promptly rebelled and attempted to establish an independent regime.¹⁰⁵

T'ai-tsung may have failed to establish hereditary territorial fiefs for his family members, but in his time and during the following reigns the royal princes nevertheless enjoyed far more powers and privileges than their successors later in the T'ang.

The Household Establishments of Royal Princes

There were several grades of prince in the T'ang system of nobility:

TITLE	RANK	NOMINAL FIEF
prince of the blood (<i>ch'in-wang</i> 親王)	1.1	10,000 households
successor prince (<i>ssu-wang</i> 嗣王)	1.2	5,000 households
prince of commandery (<i>chün-wang</i> 郡王)	1.2	5,000 households

Only the princes of the blood, that is the brothers and the sons of the reigning emperor, enjoyed special household establishments that were similar in general structure to that of the heir-apparent, but on a much reduced scale.¹⁰⁶ This entitlement continued on the statute book until the

¹⁰⁵ This was Li Lin, prince of Yung 永王李璘, Hsüan-tsung's 16th son; *CTS* 107, pp. 3264-66; *HTS* 82, pp. 3611-12; *TCTC* 219, pp. 7007, 7009, 7019.

¹⁰⁶ *TLT* 29, pp. 6a-8a; *CTS* 44, pp. 1914-15; *THY* 67, pp. 1172-73; *HTS* 49B, pp. 1305-8; *Fonct.* 2, pp. 629-44, for formal descriptions of the princes' household organizations.

ninth century, even though in reality these great princely administrations did not outlast the first decade of Hsüan-tsung's reign.

In the very early years of the dynasty the other royal princes, the hereditary princes (*ssu-wang*), that is the eldest sons of princes of the blood by their principal wives, and the princes of commanderies (*chün-wang*), the sons of the heir-apparent, although they had no princely administrations, were provided with subordinate staff to administer their fiefs of maintenance.¹⁰⁷ It is unknown when this provision was ended. It no longer existed in the 730s, when *T'ang liu-tien* was compiled, and is never mentioned, as far as I know, in any contemporary document.

Establishments of Princes of the Blood

Each prince of the blood had his personal official establishment, known as his Princely Administration. The highest ranking officials included in this were a group of preceptors and advisers, forming his personal entourage and known collectively as the prince's officers (*wang kuan* 王官):

1. a mentor (*fu* 傅, rank 3.2)¹⁰⁸;
2. an administrative counsellor (*tsu-i ts'an-chün shih* 諮議參軍事, rank 5.1);
3. a companion (*yu* 右, rank 5.4);
4. an indeterminate number of readers-in-waiting (*shih-tu* 侍讀);
5. two masters of letters (*wen-hsüeh* 文學, rank 6.3);¹⁰⁹
6. a master of ceremonies in the Eastern Hall (*tung-ko chi-chiu* 東閣祭酒, rank 7.3);
7. a master of ceremonies in the Western Hall (*hsi-ko chi-chiu* 西閣祭酒, rank 7.3).

¹⁰⁷ Such an organization is not included in any of the main descriptive sources, all of which are based on the K'ai-yüan Statutes of 719 or of 737. However, the ms. fragments of ch. 6 of the 651 Statutes (*Yung-hui ling* 永徽令) discovered at Tun-huang include such a clause. See Yamamoto Tatsuō, Ikeda On, and Okano Makoto, *Tunhuang and Turfan Documents concerning Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko, 1978, 1980), vol. 1A, p. 103 (ll. 51-54). The organization they describe is a somewhat reduced version of the fief administration of a prince of the blood, with a director (*ling*), a supervisor of agriculture (*ta-nung*), two marshals (*wei*), a chief and deputy of Offices of Instruction (*hsüeh-kuan chang, ch'eng*) and of Stables (*chiu-mu chang, ch'eng*), a chief of another office that is illegible, and five secretaries (*she-jen*). No ranks are attributed to these posts. The same ms. describes similar staff provided for dukes of states (*kwo-kung*) and commandery dukes (*chün-kung*); ll. 55-64.

¹⁰⁸ In the Statutes of 624, the mentor held the title preceptor (*shih*). This was changed to mentor in 711. The post was abolished in 714, but reestablished shortly after; *THY* 67, p. 1172; *TLT* 29, p. 6b.

¹⁰⁹ Two according to *TLT* 29, p. 7b; *CTS* 44, p. 1914. One according to *HTS* 49B, p. 1305.

These officials counseled and advised the prince and saw to his education and practical training.¹¹⁰ Most of the cases on record show these posts filled as honorary concurrent appointments (*ch'ien-kuan* 兼官) for high ranking members of the central bureaucracy.

The princely administration also included his routine administrative staff. This consisted of:

1. a chief administrator (*chang-shih* 長史, rank 4.3);
2. an assistant administrator (*ssu-ma* 司馬, rank 4.4); and
3. two directors of services (*yüan* 掾, rank 6.1).

These officials presided over a central clerical staff, consisting of:

- a. a registrar (*chu-pu* 主簿, rank 6.4);
- b. two secretarial aides (*chi-shih ts'an-chün shih* 記室參軍事, rank 6.4);
- c. an administrative supervisor (*lu-shih ts'an-chün shih* 錄事參軍事, rank 6.4);
- d. an office overseer (*lu-shih*, rank 9.4);
- e. two administrators (*ts'an-chün shih* 參軍事, rank 8.3);
- f. four unattached administrators (*hsing ts'an-chün shih* 行參軍事, rank 8.4); and
- g. two document clerks (*tien-ch'ien* 典籤, rank 8.4).

The executive functions of the prince's household were carried out by seven specialized services (*ts'ao* 曹), each headed by an administrator (*ts'an-chün-shih*, rank 7.1):

1. Service of Personnel (Kung-ts'ao 功曹);
2. Service of Granaries (Ts'ang-ts'ao 倉曹);
3. Service of Finance (Hu-ts'ao 戶曹, these first three under the oversight of one of the directors of services (*yüan* 掾);
4. Service of Troops (Ping-ts'ao 兵曹);
5. Service of Cavalry (Chi-ts'ao 騎曹);
6. Service of Law (Fa-ts'ao 法曹); and
7. Service of Works (Shih-ts'ao 士曹), these latter controlled by the second director of services (*yüan*).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ The Statutes of 624 included an additional set of officials, two attendants-in-ordinary (*ch'ang-shih*) and four gentlemen attendants-in-ordinary (*ch'ang-shih lang*), four secretaries (*she-jen*) and receptionists (*yeh-che*). According to *THY* 67, p. 1172; *HTS* 49B, p. 1305, these posts were all eliminated in 715, in the first set of K'ai-yüan Statutes. However, they were probably abolished before 651, since ch. 6 of the Tunhuang ms. *T'ung-hui ling* (see n. 107, above) lists only the same posts as those in *TLT* 29, p. 1a; *CTS* 44, p. 1914; and *HTS* 49B, p. 1305. See *Tun-huang and Turfan Documents*, p. 105, ll. 42-46.

¹¹¹ At the very beginning of the dynasty there had been three additional services, the

Each prince also had his personal military establishment, comprising his Personal Guard (*Ch'in-shih fu* 親事府), and his Palace Escort Brigade (*Chang-nei fu* 帳內府). Each of these was headed by:

1. two brigade colonels (*tien-chün* 典軍, rank 5.1);
2. two lieutenant-colonels (*fu tien-chün* 副典軍, rank 5.2); and
3. five majors (*hsiao-wei* 校尉, rank 6.3), with a cadre of junior officers, captains (*lu-shuai* 旅帥, rank 7.4), lieutenants (*tui-cheng* 隊正, rank 8.4), and second lieutenants (*fu tui-cheng* 副隊正, rank 9.4) that varied in number according to the importance of the prince.

The nominal strength of these units in T'ai-tsung's reign was 450 men in the Personal Guard, and 667 men in the Palace Escort Brigade.¹¹²

Finally, the prince had a separate administration for his fief (*ch'in wang kuo* 親王國). The fiefs of royal princes and other nobles as actually established were quite different from those envisaged by T'ai-tsung. Although their titles, being mostly the names of ancient kingdoms or commanderies, usually had regional connotations, they were not territorial jurisdictions, nor did the prince reside in or have any direct special relationship with his fief. The fief consisted merely of a specified number of fief households (*feng-hu* 封戶) in a designated prefecture (usually unconnected with the region implied in the prince's title) the revenues collected from which were paid to the prince's fief administration and formed his main source of income.¹¹³ The fief was usually described simply as of so many hundred households. But this figure was in almost all cases only the number of fief households to which the prince was nominally entitled, and he actually received the revenues from a much smaller fief of maintenance (*shih-feng* 食封, or *shih shih-feng* 實食封).

Thus the fief organization in effect was the office that supervised the collection of the prince's revenues and controlled his expenditures. Its personnel all held low ranks compared with the members of his household administration. The fief administration was headed by the director of the fief (*ling* 令, rank 7.4), assisted by a supervisor of agricultural works (*ta-nung* 大農, rank 8.4), a marshal (*wei* 尉, rank 9.2), and an assistant (*ch'eng* 丞, rank

Service of Armor (K'ai-ts'ao), the Service of Lands (T'ien-ts'ao), and the Service of Waterways (Shui-ts'ao).

¹¹² *TLT* 29, pp. 3b-4b; *HTS* 49B, p. 1307.

¹¹³ It was common in the seventh century for the fief administrator to collect the regular taxes but to exchange these for local commodities in order to make a profit; e. g., *CTS* 64, pp. 2430-31.

9.4) with a non-ranking office staff of twenty-five. The director also controlled four subordinate bureaus, each consisting of a bureau chief (*chang*, 長 rank 9.2) and his assistant (*ch'eng*, rank 9.4). These bureaus were:

1. Office of Instruction (Hsüeh-kuan 學官) responsible for the instruction of the women of the prince's household;
2. Office of Provisions (Shih-kuan 食官), which was also in charge of building works;
3. Office of Stables (Chiu-mu 廐牧); and
4. Office of Storehouses (Tien-fu 典府).

The offices comprising a prince's household according to the Statutes were thus very numerous and relatively high ranking: every prince's mentors and household administration comprised 30 ranking civil officials, 5 of them holding the fifth and higher ranks; his bodyguards included somewhat more numerous ranking military officers; and his fief administration numbered another 12 ranking civil officials. Therefore, each princely household, if it had been staffed at full strength, would have had more ranking official posts than any one of the central government's Six Boards (the staff of which could number up to twenty-seven) or the Administration of the Metropolitan District (thirty).

Moreover, there were considerable numbers of princes of the blood. Until 682 a household administration was not established for a prince until he was old enough to leave the palace, normally at about the age of fourteen or fifteen, when he began to participate in the major court assemblies. Even so, twenty of Kao-tsu's sons and twelve of T'ai-tsung's were enfeoffed as princes. Of course, not all these princes were endowed with a fief or provided with a household administration. Some died in childhood, many others were reduced in rank, cashiered, or executed for involvement in various abortive conspiracies and for other political reasons. Moreover, those who were enfeoffed received only a tiny fraction of the fief households to which they were entitled.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ We can trace the fiefs of 13 of Kao-tsu's sons and 6 of T'ai-tsung's. All received an original fief of maintenance of from 600 to 800 households. On the accession of Kao-tsung these were increased to 1,000, or in two exceptional cases to 1,500; for these data, see *CTS* 64, pp. 2425-36; *CTS* 76, pp. 2659-66; Ch'ien I 錢易, *Nan-pu hsin-shu* 南部新書, ch. *chia*, p. 6. On the basis of the regulations in the *Statutes* they were each entitled to 10,000 households. For the difference between paper entitlements (*hsü-i* 虛邑; *hsü-feng* 虛封) and actual fiefs of maintenance (*shih-i* 實邑; *shih-feng* 實封; *shih shih-feng* 實食封), see the classic study of Niida Noboru 仁井田陞, "Tōdai no hōshaku oyobi shokuhō sei" 唐代の封爵及び食封, *THGH* 10 (1939), pp. 1-63. See also Tonami Mamoru 禰波護, "Zui no bōetsu to Tōsho

In the 680s and 690s the repeated purges under the empress Wu drastically thinned the ranks of the T'ang royalty, but after the restoration of Chung-tsung a systematic attempt was made to restore many princely lines that had been extinguished. Their attendant fiefs were restored, and the sizes of the fiefs granted to current princes and princesses were greatly increased. Beginning with Hsüan-tsung the royal family began to proliferate wildly. Nineteen of Hsüan-tsung's thirty sons, 1 uncle, and his 4 brothers were ennobled as princes of the blood, while 34 of his grandsons were created princes of commanderies and another 24 dukes of states. The relentless growth of the imperial family continued after Hsüan-tsung's abdication and death. Eleven of Su-tsung's sons were ennobled as princes of the blood, as were 18 of Tai-tsung's, 9 of Te-tsung's, 22 of Shun-tsung's, and 17 of Hsien-tsung's sons.

The drain on the treasury represented by so many inflated princely household establishments would have been incalculable, had the household posts all been filled and had the fiefs of maintenance to which the princes were formally entitled (the tax revenues from 10,000 fief households for a prince of the blood) been granted in full. At the end of T'ai-tsung's reign, when the registered tax-paying households in the empire had still recovered only to 3,800,000, from a peak of 9,075,791 in 609, such a level of fief households would have been completely unsustainable. Even in the 720s, when the taxable population had almost doubled, if the regulations had been followed to the letter the revenues of the princes ennobled in Hsüan-tsung's reign alone would have consumed the taxes from more than a quarter of a million households, and the salaries and allowances of their household officers an enormous additional sum.

However, a crisis had already been reached by the second decade of Hsüan-tsung's reign, a crisis probably provoked as much by the desire to restrict the princes' political activities as by the costs of their maintenance. Beginning in 720, a series of problems beset the imperial family. First, the emperor's younger brother Li Fan, prince of Ch'i 岐王李範, was involved together with high-ranking palace officials, one of them the consort of one of his sisters, in some sort of alleged conspiracy.¹¹⁵ Then in 724 the childless

no shokujippō" 隋の親閥と唐初の食實封, *THGH* 37 (1966), pp. 153-82; rpt. *idem*, *Tōdai seiji shakai shi kenkyū* 唐代政治社會史研究 (Kyoto, 1986), pp. 249-91. This is translated with additional material in Jens Østergård Petersen, "The Sui Dynasty Inspection of Countenances and the Early T'ang Fiefs of Maintenance," *East Asian Institute Occasional Papers* 2 (East Asian Institute, U. of Copenhagen 1988), pp. 5-59.

¹¹⁵ *CTS* 95, p. 3016. The offenses involved seem to have been minor. At this time the

empress Wang was degraded after allegations that she had been dabbling in magic to ensure a child. She was never replaced. In 725 Li Yeh, prince of Hsüeh 薛王李業, the emperor's other younger brother, was apparently the center of another plot that involved his brother-in-law and the director of the Imperial Household Department.¹¹⁶ Neither prince was himself punished in these incidents, but it was becoming clear that the lack of control over members of the royal family living independently outside the palace not only made them a potential danger in themselves but also made them vulnerable targets for political conspirators looking for a figurehead around whom they might form a political faction or plot a coup.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RESIDENCES OF THE TEN ROYAL PRINCES

In 725, after the completion of the vastly expensive *feng-shan* 封禪 sacrifices on Mount T'ai, a radical change was made to the system.¹¹⁷ Since Hsüan-tsung's accession, his sons had remained resident in the Inner Palace. Now many of the young princes were approaching maturity, and instead of setting up each of them in his own mansion in the city outside the palace, as had been the custom, a special great common residence (*ta-chai* 大宅) was constructed for them in the walled park east of An-kuo Temple 安國寺, in the northeast corner of Ch'ang-an. This site was divided up into separate

emperor had forbidden the princes and dukes from close intimacy with persons outside the court. Pei Hsü-chi 裴虛己, consort of the Huo-kuo princess 霍國公主, Jui-tsung's youngest daughter, was found guilty of making excursions and enjoying banquets with Li Fan, and of privately holding prognosticatory apocrypha – politically dangerous material. He was exiled to Ling-nan. In a linked incident, Liu T'ing-ch'i 劉庭琦, marshal of Wan-nien county, and Chang E 張謨, grand invocator (*t'ai-chu* 太祝) of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, were demoted and banished on the quite extraordinary charge of drinking and composing poetry with the prince, who himself went unpunished. Hsüan-tsung's explicit point was to remove bad influences from him.

¹¹⁶ *CTS* 95, pp. 3018–19. The various participants were charged with "privately discussing political good fortune and disaster" 私議休咎, i. e., political portents. Private prophecy was forbidden, and was punishable by death by strangulation under article 268 of the Code if it touched on predictions concerning the fortunes of the dynasty. His coaccused were Wei Pin 韋賓, director of palace attendants in the heir-apparent's Left Secretariat, who was the younger brother of his consort, and Huang-fu Hsün 皇甫詢, director of the Imperial Household Service. Hsüan-tsung ordered Wei flogged to death and Huang-fu banished as prefect of Chin-chou 錦州 in Szechwan. The prince's consort surrendered herself awaiting punishment, and Li Yeh himself dared not visit the emperor. But when they were summoned to court the emperor pardoned them completely.

¹¹⁷ *CTS* 107, pp. 3171–72; *THY* 5, pp. 51–52; *HTS* 82, pp. 3615–16; *TCTC* 213, pp. 6777–78; Hsü, *T'ang liang ching* 3, p. 27a; *Ch'ang-an chih* 9, p. 1a.

residential courts (*yüan* 院) for the individual princes, and was known as the Residence of the Ten princes (Shih-wang chai 十王宅),¹¹⁸ after the ten sons of the emperor who were first settled therein. The compound was placed under the management of the palace eunuchs (*chung-kuan* 中官). The princes and their households were fed daily from the kitchens of the heir-apparent's Court of Domestic Services, and some court officials were appointed as concurrent tutors-in-waiting, and came to the compound to instruct them in literature and calligraphy. The princes' compound communicated with the emperor's court in the Ta-ming Palace by an enclosed passageway.

Later seven more of Hsüan-tsung's sons were moved to the residence when they grew old enough to be enfeoffed. Some of these princes were killed both during the succession crisis in 737 and as a result of various alleged conspiracies in the 740s. Irrespective of the actual number of resident princes, however, the compound remained known as the Residence of the Ten princes.

As their numbers expanded, the Residence spilled over into the nearby Eastern Imperial Park. Later a similar residence called the Court for the Hundred Grandsons (Pai-sun yüan 百孫院) was built to house the rapidly proliferating next generation. The princes seem to have lived in rather cramped quarters and under irksome restrictions. The residences housed the princes' consorts and children and great numbers of palace women servants (*kung-jen* 宮人), nominally 400 for each of the courts of the Ten Princes, 30 or 40 for each court of the Hundred Grandsons. There was a special treasury in the residence, the Treasury of the Royal Brothers (Wei-ch'eng k'u 維城庫) from which the princes' stipends were disbursed and their expenses paid. Similar but smaller compounds for the royal sons and grandsons were also built at the emperor's separate summer palace, the Chiu-ch'eng kung 九成宮, and at the hot-spring palace east of Ch'ang-an, the Hua-ch'ing kung 華清宮, which he visited annually with many of his court entourage.

This change put an end to the lavish independent life style that the imperial princes had previously enjoyed. Their households of officials and

¹¹⁸ It was also known colloquially as the Ten Residences (Shih chai 十宅), the Sixteen Residences (Shih-liu 十六宅), Ten Palaces (Shih-kung 十宮), or sometimes the Courts of Cordial Relatives (Mu-ch'in yüan 睦親院); see *TCTC* 213, pp. 6777–78; *CTS* 107, pp. 3171–72; *THY* 5, pp. 51–52; *HTS* 82, pp. 3615–16.

guards became superfluous, and although these organizations and provision for their offices remained in the statutes of 737, in practise they had already been drastically reduced to a mere handful of officials. The vestigial household administrations of the various imperial princes were all accommodated together in cramped common premises in Hsüan-p'ing ward 宣平坊, south of the Eastern Market 東市 and far from the princely residences, and their officials ceased to have any real functions apart from making their formal appearance at the great seasonal audiences.¹¹⁹ Probably most of the posts simply remained vacant to be sometimes used as dignified sinecures.

ENDING OF PROVINCIAL POSTS FOR ROYAL PRINCES

For the time being the royal princes themselves continued to be given provincial appointments, for example, as military governors. But these were now usually clearly designated as nominal (*ling* 領) or in absentia (*yao-ling* 遙領) appointments. The prince remained in the palace, while the actual duties of his post were performed by a proxy holding the title of deputy-governor (*fu-shih* 副使).

Discontinuance of Imperial Branch Lineages (fang)

Hsüan-tsung was also responsible, at about the same time, for a further change in the status of the royal princes. Until his reign, on the death of every royal prince his descendants had formed a separate, royal branch-lineage (*fang* 房). By the 730s there were forty-one such formal branches of the imperial family recognized, ten of which were collateral lines from predynastic generations. From Hsüan-tsung's time no new branches were set up.¹²⁰ The careful and detailed genealogy of family members previously kept up regularly by the Court for Imperial Clan Affairs (Tsong-cheng ssu 宗正寺) also seems to have fallen into disarray after the 760s. A new imperial genealogy was commissioned in 766, and a continuation of this was completed in 839.¹²¹ But at the end of 852 the Court for Imperial Clan

Affairs was again complaining of widespread confusion in their records, and requesting that every household of the royal clan should compile a record of the date when every prince had been first enfeoffed, noting also his ancestors for five generations and listing his sons and grandsons. This was to be sent to the Court of Genealogy (T'u-p'u yüan 圖譜院) of the Court for Imperial Clan Affairs, so that they could unravel the confusion in the records and differentiate senior and junior lines.¹²²

We are not told what resulted from this cry of desperation. The historians who wrote up the history of the later reigns certainly seem to have lacked even the most basic information about the imperial family. Whereas we are reasonably well informed about the imperial clan members before the An Lu-shan rebellion, the level of information progressively declines thereafter. For the reigns after Mu-tsung we have only the barest listing of the names and fiefs of princes and princesses, with no indication even of the princes' mothers, and with confusion over the number of imperial sons and daughters and the order of their birth for some reigns.¹²³

THE ROYAL PRINCES IN THE LATE-T'ANG PERIOD

In 827 the chief administrator of the household of prince Ch'üing 瓊王 petitioned the throne complaining that the common office in Hsüan-p'ing ward that he and his colleagues in the households of other princes had once shared, and which had long been allowed to fall derelict, had been repossessed by the commissioners for estates (*chuang-chai shih* 莊宅使) in 818, and the site sold to a wealthy military governor. Since then, they had had no place whatever in which to perform even the formalities of

Court of Imperial Clan Affairs. In 839 Wen-tsung ordered the vice-president of the Supreme Court of Justice Li Ch'ü 李衢 to bring this genealogy up to date, and Liu Fang's grandson, the Han-lin academician Liu Ching 柳璟 was commissioned to write a continuation (10 additional *ch.*) covering the reigns from Te-tsung onward; *CTS* 149, p. 4033, *THY* 36, p. 666.

¹²² *THY* 36, p. 666.

¹²³ *THY* 5, pp. 52-54; *HTS* 79-82. Chiu Tang-shu's coverage is as follows: *ch.* 64 (Sons of Kao-tsu); 75 (T'ai-tsung); 86 (Kao-tsung, Chung-tsung); 95 (Jui-tsung); 107 (Hsüan-tsung); 116 (Su-tsung, Tai-tsung); 150 (Te-tsung, Shun-tsung); 173 (Hsien-tsung, Mu-tsung, Ching-tsung, Wen-tsung, Wu-tsung, Hsüan-tsung, I-tsung, Hsi-tsung, Chao-tsung). For many of the sons of Wu-tsung and his successors we lack information on their mothers, date of death, posthumous titles, and details of their heirs; we mostly receive the date of their enfeoffment. The genealogical tables of the imperial family in *HTS* 70A-70B also give no details beyond the names and fief-titles of the sons of emperors from Mu-tsung onwards, rarely information beyond the grandsons' generation for any emperor from Hsüan-tsung to Hsien-tsung.

¹¹⁹ See *CTS* 107, pp. 3271-22; *THY* 5, p. 51; *HTS* 82, p. 3616; also Hsü, *T'ang liang ching* 3, pp. 27a-b.

¹²⁰ *HTS* 70A, pp. 955-57; 70B, pp. 2147, 2176.

¹²¹ The formal imperial genealogy *Yung-t'ai hsin p'u* 永泰新譜, or *Huang-shih Yung-t'ai p'u* 皇室永泰譜 (20 *ch.*) was compiled in 766 by the official historian Liu Fang 柳芳 and presented to Tai-tsung in that year by Li Ch'ü, prince of Wu 吳王李柝, then president of the

their offices.¹²⁴ As a result of this memorial they were given the use of another recently confiscated mansion in the Yen-k'ang ward 延康坊, near the Western Market and even farther from the princely residences, to use as a common office.¹²⁵

Replacement of Fiefs by Money Stipends

The financial independence of the princes, ensured by the system of fiefs of maintenance, was also greatly reduced. The numbers of fief households to which princes and other nobles were entitled as of right were very large, and although these entitlements bore little relationship with the much smaller fiefs of maintenance that were actually granted, the costs of the system were a problem on a national scale.¹²⁶ In 765 the princes' entitlements to fiefs of maintenance were reduced by a third "pending the end of the current military crisis."¹²⁷ The reduction was still in force twenty years later. In 797 the revenues from fief households were commuted to a standard payment of 800 lengths of silk in respect of each hundred nominal fief households.¹²⁸

There was also a special Court for Ritual Assemblies (Li-hui yüan 禮會院), in the Ch'ung-jen ward 崇仁坊, which was used for the marriage ceremonies of the heir-apparent, royal princes, and princesses. After the rebellion this court became derelict, and was eventually sold off by the commissioners for estates.¹²⁹ New premises in the Ch'ang-hsing ward 長興坊 were acquired for the same purpose in 814, but within a decade these too had fallen into disuse and disrepair.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ It is significant of the loss of any real function for these offices that it took them nine years to draw the court's attention to the fact that they no longer had any premises.

¹²⁵ *THY* 67, p. 1172; Hsü, *Tang liang-ching* 3, pp. 23b-24a; 4, p. 13b; *Ch'ang-an chih* 10, p. 3b.

¹²⁶ See the lengthy edict dated 709, included in *THY* 90, pp. 1642-44, which says that by that date the twenty or thirty enfeoffed households of Kao-tsu's time had now grown to more than 140, and that over 600,000 taxpayers in 54 prefectures, all in the richest parts of the empire, were required to pay part of their revenues to various fief-holding nobles. The total expense was computed at 1,200,000 lengths of silk.

¹²⁷ *THY* 90, p. 1646.

¹²⁸ *THY* 90, p. 1647.

¹²⁹ *CTS* 107, p. 3172; *THY* 5, p. 3616; *HTS* 82, p. 3616. According to Ch'ien, *Nan-pu hsin-shu*, ch. ting, p. 37; Hsü, *Tang liang-ching* 3, p. 4a, this court was established in 731, when the government bought the site, formerly the western half of the mansion of the Ch'ang-ning princess 長寧公主 and her consort Yang Shen-chiao 楊慎交. It was administered under the Court of Agriculture (Ssu-nung ssu 司農寺). It may have been abandoned because noble ladies were massacred there during the rebellion.

¹³⁰ Hsü, *Tang liang-ching* 2, p. 8b. One of the omissioners (*shih-i*) was dismissed at this time for requesting the use of it for his own family wedding; Ch'ien, *Nan-pu hsin-shu*, ting, p. 37.

The only posts in the princes' administrations that sometimes continued to be filled were those of their various preceptors, the mentors and companions. These offices, however, were now sinecures, titles merely allocated to high-ranking officials in the central government as honorary concurrent duties.¹³¹

THE ROYAL PRINCESSES

The daughters of an emperor presented a lesser, but still considerable, expense to the government. Imperial princesses, like their brothers, were bestowed with noble ranks and titles, and were granted fiefs of maintenance as a source of income.¹³²

TITLE	RELATIONSHIP	RANK	FIEF
senior grand princess <i>t'ai-chang kung-chu</i> 大長宮主	paternal aunt of emperor	1.1	2,000 families
grand princess <i>chang-kung chu</i> 長宮主	sister of reigning emperor	1.1	up to 1,000 families
imperial princess <i>kung-chu</i> 宮主	daughter of reigning emperor	1.1	300 families
commandery princess <i>chün-chu</i> 郡主	daughter of heir-apparent	1.2	
county princess <i>hsien-chu</i> 縣主	daughter of prince of the blood	2.2	

All five grades of princess were considered as titled ladies of the outer court (*wai ming-fu* 外命婦) and as such enjoyed many privileges. However, whereas the royal princes remained members of the imperial clan, the

¹³¹ E.g., in 832 the emperor Wen-tsung selected three well-respected Confucian scholars to serve the prince of Lu, one of whom became his monitor when he was installed as heir-apparent later that year; *THY* 67, p. 1173.

¹³² In the table below, princess's ranks are "equivalent ranks 視品," the ceremonial nature of which is treated in Niida Noburu, *Tōryō shūi* 唐令拾遺 (Tokyo, 1933), pp. 316-17. See also *ILT* 2, p. 37b; *HTS* 46, p. 1188. To confuse the issue, imperial princesses (*kung-chu*) were commonly referred to as the monarch's princesses (*chün-chu* 君主). Only the first three categories, below, all of upper-first rank, were allowed fief administrations, although all grades of princess were granted fiefs of maintenance of a specified number of households contributing to their maintenance.

princesses, like all women, ceased to belong to their family of birth as soon as they were married, and became part of their husbands' households. From that time the government continued to provide the emoluments due from the princess's fief, and of course provided a substantial dowry, but otherwise she was treated as the wife of her consort (who was given the title *fu-ma tu-wei* 駙馬都尉, commonly abbreviated to *fu-ma* 駙馬, or 副馬), not as a part of the royal family. Although the consort and his family were placed on a special register of relatives by marriage (*chu-ch'in* 諸親) kept by the Court for Imperial Clan Affairs, their children were not considered as royalty. A princess's sons were, however, eligible to use her rank to claim entry into the roll of officials by hereditary privilege (*yin* 蔭).¹³³

A royal princess had no formal household administration, except for a brief period from 706 to 710 when, while the court was under the dominance of Chung-tsung's empress Wei, her daughter princess An-lo, and empress Wu's powerful daughter, the princess T'ai-p'ing, princesses were provided with administrations and household officials similar to those for royal princes. The princess T'ai-p'ing was granted a household administration and entitlement to dignities equal to those of a prince of the blood with, in addition, a real fief of 10,000 households. The empress Wei's own two daughters, princess Ch'ang-ning 長寧 and princess An-lo were granted the same household administration but without a chief administrator. They were also provided with their own guards and fiefs of maintenance of 2,500 and 3,000 households, respectively. This did not satisfy princess An-lo, who demanded unsuccessfully, as we have already seen, to be created crown princess-apparent (*huang t'ai-nü* 皇太女). The remaining royal princesses, Chung-tsung's daughters by other royal consorts, were granted establishments one-half this size. These dignities for royal princesses were ended with the fall of empress Wei in 710 and the accession of Jui-tsung, except in the case of his sister the princess T'ai-p'ing, who was still too powerful politically for him to be able to reduce her entitlements. After her fall and death in 713 no other princess was ever again provided with a full household administration.¹³⁴

The only exception was made for royal princesses married off to non-

Chinese rulers in dynastic marriages (so-called *ho-ch'in* 和親).¹³⁵ In such cases it was considered appropriate to "specially establish an administration" (*te chih fu* 特置府) for her, equivalent to the household of a royal prince of the blood. This household administration accompanied her to her new country as a personal entourage.¹³⁶

In normal times a princess had no personal administration, only a small office (*i-ssu* 邑司) to administer her fief.¹³⁷ This was headed by a director (rank 7.4) and an assistant (rank 8.4), who had control of the princess's reven-

¹³⁵ This seems to have applied only to imperial princesses, and not even to all of them. Most of the "princesses" married to foreign rulers under the T'ang were daughters of more distant collateral relatives, or daughters of imperial clan members. This was admitted in a speech made by the T'ang delegate Li Yü, commandery prince of Han-chung, who escorted Su-tsung's daughter, the Ning-kuo princess 寧國公主 (previously twice married), to wed the Uighur khaghan in 758.

Up to this time, when China has made a marriage alliance with neighboring countries the brides have been daughters of imperial clan members, given the name "princesses." Now, however, the princess Ning-kuo is a real daughter of the emperor. Moreover she has talent and good looks, and has made a marriage with the khaghan ten-thousand li from home. You, Khaghan, are now the T'ang emperor's son-in-law, and appropriate ritual behavior is to be expected. How could she be made to sit on the couch and receive your commands?

See CTS 195, pp. 5200-1; CTS 10, p. 253; HTS 83, p. 3360; 217A, p. 6116-17. For a list of *ho-ch'in* marriages, see THY 6, p. 75. Other material is included in T'FYK 978 and 979.

¹³⁶ In the case of Ning-kuo (see previous n.). Accounts of her marriage do not mention establishment of an administration for her, but when she returned to Ch'ang-an in 789 her Princess's Administration (*kung-chu fu*) was abolished and replaced by a normal fief office (*i-ssu*); THY 6, p. 75. Elsewhere she is said to have voluntarily given up her establishment; HTS 83, p. 3660. Te-tsung's daughter, the Hsien-an princess 咸安公主 (later Hsiang-mu, of the state of Yen), was married to the Uighur khaghan in 788. Before the marriage Te-tsung established an administration with officials and subordinates equal to those attributed to a prince of the blood; CTS 195, p. 5208; HTS 217A, p. 6124; T'FYK 979, pp. 166-17A. A similar special arrangement (parity with the household of a royal prince) was made when the Tai-ho princess 太和公主, Mu-tsung's tenth younger sister, was married to the Uighur khaghan in 821; CTS 195, p. 5211; HTS 217B, p. 6129. That this was a specific arrangement relating to her marriage was clearly understood, since when in 843 she returned to Ch'ang-an after the collapse of the Uighur empire she was first promoted as senior princess, after which her administration was abolished; HTS 83, pp. 3668-69.

¹³⁷ Except for the brief period of Chung-tsung's reign, the fiefs of maintenance actually provided for princesses were comparatively small. Until 682 these fiefs did not exceed 300 households (princes of the blood then received a standard grant of 800, in exceptional cases up to 1,000). Princess T'ai-p'ing, as empress Wu's only daughter, was, exceptionally, granted 350. The granting of extravagant fiefs of maintenance began in 698, when T'ai-p'ing's fief was increased to 3,000, and reached new excesses after the accession of Chung-tsung in 705, when her fief was increased to 10,000 and those of Ch'ang-ning and An-lo were increased to 2,500 and 3,000. (THY 90, p. 1638, gives these figures as 3,500 and 4,000.) Newly acceded, Hsüan-tsung attempted to reduce the fiefs of princesses to 300 households, but met with strong opposition and eventually established a standard of 1,000.

¹³³ THY 6, p. 72. An edict of 799 denied this privilege to adopted sons of princesses.

¹³⁴ See THY 6, p. 69; CTS 51, p. 2172; HTS 83, p. 3650.

ues, her personal wealth,¹³⁸ her accumulated goods, and her lands and gardens.¹³⁹ Two low-ranking registrars, rank 9.2, and an overseer had control of the tax revenue from her fief, and managed her household's incomings and expenditures.¹⁴⁰ The fief administrations of the various princesses came under the general control of the Court for Imperial Clan Affairs.

After the An Lu-shan rebellion the fief revenues of princes and princesses alike were, as we have seen, reduced.¹⁴¹ Following the "*liang-shui fa*" tax reform of 780 it was no longer practical to earmark the tax revenues from designated wealthy households in specific prefectures to pay for the support of individual princesses, and in 791 their fief revenues were replaced by a tariff of set payments, either in cloth or cash.¹⁴² But this rule must have been rescinded at some point or simply disregarded, as in 851 they were forbidden to have their fief administrations approach local prefectures and counties directly, except in respect of the revenues due from their fief households.¹⁴³

The Consorts of Royal Princesses

The consorts of royal princesses were carefully chosen.¹⁴⁴ Marriage into the royal family always had a political dimension, and almost all consorts

came from well-established aristocratic families, and were often the sons of high-ranking officials or military officers. Unlike the royal princes, who after Hsüan-tsung's time were deliberately kept out of public life and never granted high substantive offices, the consorts of princesses were almost always related to men holding high positions, and often themselves held substantive offices, sometimes becoming very important officials.¹⁴⁵ Many of their sons too became officials, sometimes rising to high rank. Thus these relatives by marriage of royal princesses were often deeply involved in the politics of the day, and their royal wives provided them with an important personal link to the emperor and the palace. Some of the princesses in this way played an indirect but nonetheless important role in politics.

The royal princesses lived outside the palace in their own private mansions, often in great splendor. When the emperor wished to issue an order to them he would employ palace eunuch messengers (*chung-shih* 中使) to deliver it, but in general the princesses enjoyed considerable independence.

Not all of the princesses married; some entered the Taoist religious life and became nuns or abbesses of Taoist temples. Others, even though they were married, lived openly promiscuous lives, in some cases being sequestered in the palace to avoid further public scandal.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁸ The most important item was presumably her dowry, and since a good many princesses married more than once, the fief office would ensure that this remained the property of the princess, and did not remain with the family of her husband.

¹³⁹ Princesses sometimes held lands of their own. The Han-yang princess 漢陽公主, eldest of Shun-tsung's daughters, once repudiated her husband Kuo Ts'ung 郭縱. Later in life she became a by-word for her frugality, said to have scratched a record of her rent receipts on the wall with an iron hairpin; *HTS* 83, p. 3665.

¹⁴⁰ *TLT* 29, pp. 20a-b; *CTS* 44, p. 1915; *HTS* 49B, p. 1308. *HTS* lists only a single registrar. There was also a small office staff of eight clerks (*shih*), two receptionists (*yeh-che*), two secretaries (*she-jen*), and two domestic attendants (*chia-li*).

¹⁴¹ *THY* 90, p. 1645. Under the new scale, imperial princesses were allocated 500 fief households, and lesser princesses had theirs reduced by one-third. All their revenues were to be collected in the prefectures of Hsüan-chou (southern Anhwei), Ming-chou, Yüeh-chou, Chü-chou, and Mu-chou in Chekiang.

¹⁴² *THY* 90, p. 1647. Henceforth imperial princesses were to receive as fief payments (*feng-wu*) 700 lengths of fine hemp cloth payable in two annual installments corresponding to the two annual collections of taxes under the "*liang-shui*" system. Commandery princesses were to receive 100 strings of cash quarterly, and county princesses 70 per quarter.

¹⁴³ *THY* 6, p. 74.

¹⁴⁴ Lists of the daughters of successive emperors, with details of their marriages, are given in *THY* 6, pp. 63-66; *HTS* 83, pp. 3641-76. These lists are, however, incomplete, particularly after about 850. On these marriages, see Wang Shou-nan 王壽南, "T'ang-tai kung-chu chih hun-yin" 唐代公主之婚姻, in Li Yu-ning 李佑寧 and Chang Yü-fa 張玉法, eds., *Chung-kuo fu-nü shih lun-wen chi* 中國婦女史論文集 (Taipei, 1988) 2, pp. 90-144.

¹⁴⁵ This problem is very complex and requires a careful study. In the early-9th c. it seems to have been the practise that a princess's husband would first serve two full tours of duty in an acting (*chien-chiao* 檢校) post, and would then be eligible for an appointment to a regularly established court office (*cheng-yüan kuan* 正員官). After 808 their appointments were restricted to the capital and princesses were no longer allowed to accompany their husbands to provincial postings. Their postings and promotions were, in theory at least, supposed to come under the overview of the Court of Imperial Clan Affairs; *THY* 6, p. 72.

¹⁴⁶ E.g., the Yen-kuang princess 延光公主 (later princess of the state of Kao 郛國), the seventh daughter of Su-tsung. Originally she was married to P'ei Hui 裴徽, and then remarried to Hsiao Sheng 蕭升. After the death of her second husband she had a string of lovers. When this became known Te-tsung was furious and secluded her in her residence, while her principal lover was flogged to death and three others banished to Ling-nan. In 788 she was stripped of her title for practising *ku* 蠱 black magic, while five of her sons were imprisoned in distant parts of the empire for their involvement. Her daughter was the consort of the heir-apparent, and the emperor, fearing the power of the princess's hatred, was going to have her killed, but she died in 790. The heir-apparent just then fell sick, and to prevent further disasters from the magic spells his consort too was killed; *HTS* 83, p. 3662.

One of Te-tsung's daughters, the princess I-yang 義陽公主, was secluded in the palace, and her consort confined in fetters in their mansion because of their scandalous impropriety; *HTS* 83, p. 3664. Shun-tsung's sixth daughter, the Hsiang-yang princess 襄陽公主, who had been married to Chang K'o-li 張克禮, the son of a Ho-pei military governor, also led a scandalous life, going into the city and the marketplace incognito. She had several paramours, and paid officials heavily to hush the matter up, but eventually was discovered by her husband, and sequestered in the palace by Mu-tsung; *HTS* 83, p. 3666.

Like other high-born ladies of their era, they remarried freely without this being considered an outrage to morality, as it would have been in later centuries.¹⁴⁷ Some were remarried more than once. In law they were forbidden to remarry if they had already born sons, but this rule was not strictly enforced.¹⁴⁸ In the later part of the ninth century, remarriage seems to have become less common, and in 851 the remarriage of princesses with living children was forbidden by edict. In case a princess without children wished to remarry, the Court for Imperial Clan Affairs was responsible for determining whether the marriage should be permitted. If a princess falsely claimed to have no children in order to facilitate her remarriage her case was to be referred to the competent authorities for punishment.¹⁴⁹

SUMMARY

For the early-T'ang state, engaged in reestablishing a single dynastic power after the failure of the Sui empire, it was essential not only that the regime establish temporal stability, but that it should also be seen as preparing for permanence. This permanence could be ensured only by measures to protect the succession to the throne, and to ensure that it should descend generation after generation to an acceptable successor, the choice of the dying emperor and his principal advisors, and that he should be prepared to face the daunting demands of his office.

As an institutional foundation for this, the state made generous provision for the support and maintenance of the large pool of imperial children. To ensure that the designated successor, the heir-apparent, who would be chosen from their number, would be given a suitable training under chosen tutors and administrative experience to fit him for becoming emperor, complex arrangements were made and large numbers of officials were involved.

¹⁴⁷ See the entries on royal princesses in *THY* 6, pp. 63-66; *HTS* 82. The details on their spouses are by no means complete, particularly for later emperors' daughters, but there are a good many cases of remarriage. Three of Chung-tsung's eight daughters remarried, 3 of Jui-tsung's, 7 of Hsüan-tsung's (plus a daughter who was married three times), and 2 of Su-tsung's seven daughters. Remarriage seems to have become less common in the ninth c., but this reflects the fact that most of the data were lost, rather than a change in mores.

¹⁴⁸ *HTS* 46, p. 1188.

¹⁴⁹ *THY* 6, p. 74. These new rules were to be conveyed to the Court for Noble Ladies (Ming-fu yilan 命婦院) and to become a permanently applicable ordinance (*ch'ang-shih* 常式).

In the first quarter-century of the dynasty, when grip on the provinces was still far from secure, T'ai-tsung viewed the other imperial princes as potential allies who could be enfeoffed to rule strategic regions of the empire on behalf of the emperor. Although the hereditary succession among these princes was almost immediately abandoned, the idea persisted until the early-eighth century. But it also became clear that in reality large numbers of imperial princes, removed from strict court control, were liable to become potential rivals rather than allies.

The succession and the arrangements for the royal family were destabilized in the reign of Kao-tsung by his powerful empress Wu, who wished to ensure the succession for one of her own sons, deposing two heirs-apparent in the process. After her husband's death in 683 she dominated the court as regent and decimated the imperial family in repeated purges. Dismissing two young emperors, eventually she set up a dynasty of her own from 690 to 705, during which period she attempted various ways of transferring the succession to her own Wu clan. Under her successor, Chung-tsung, real power was once again wielded by his empress, who even attempted to appoint a daughter as the imperial heir.

The institutional arrangements designed in the early-T'ang proved resilient, however, although the succession had rarely gone as originally intended.

Under Hsüan-tsung, who had suffered a number of threats to his own position before coming to the throne, it became apparent that the great number of imperial princes living independent lives, with some of them serving in influential offices, was a source of political instability. The princes were resettled in a special palace complex, their social contacts limited, and they were forbidden to be appointed to any but nominal offices. By degrees these restrictions were retained and made even more severe under Hsüan-tsung's successors. The princes' "fiefs" were replaced by money salaries, which were repeatedly diminished, their administrations and numerous staff were gradually reduced almost to nil, and by the early-ninth century the princes, living in the cramped quarters of the Princely Residences, were an object of pity to some of the court, who described them as a pool of frustrated talent with no outlet for their abilities.

The arrangements for selecting and training a dynastic heir, on the other hand, were restored and strengthened, and probably functioned better during the latter half of the eighth century than at any other period

under the T'ang. This was important to the dynasty's survival, since this was a period of severe pressures from growing provincial autonomy. Not until the unexpected succession of Hsien-tsung in 805 did an emperor succeed to the throne without many years of preparation as heir-apparent.

But this system too was undermined in the ninth century. The succession, which up to this time in almost every case had been determined by the will of the deceased emperor and his chief ministers, now fell into the hands of the palace eunuchs, who arranged every succession after 805, sometimes with scant attention either to the principle of generational seniority or to the dying emperor's intentions. A series of young emperors, from 820 to 845, who died leaving only infant sons, broke the generational pattern of the succession, and disturbed the institutional arrangements for the appointment of an heir-apparent. After 838 there was never a serving heir-apparent, the eunuchs' chosen successor being appointed heir only days before succeeding. The monarchy was fatally undermined, having lost control of its own destiny. All emperors after Mu-tsung were chosen from a large pool of princes, living in their residences, totally lacking any experience of government and with very limited contacts beyond the palace. Many of them came to the throne very young, sometimes as little more than children. Only one of them lived to the age of fifty.

From the end of Hsuan-tsung's reign in 859, during which some degree of administrative regularity was restored but no successor had been designated, the T'ang royal house declined into little more than a symbol of continuity, a continuity that they could no longer themselves influence. The careful provisions put in place by the founding emperors had come to nothing.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CKCY	<i>Chen-kuan cheng-yao</i> 貞觀政要
CTS	<i>Chiu T'ang-shu</i> 舊唐書
CTW	[<i>Ch'in-ting</i>] <i>Ch'üan T'ang wen</i> [欽定] 全唐文
Fonct.	des Rotours, <i>Traité des fonctionnaires et traité de l'armée</i>
HTS	<i>Hsin T'ang-shu</i> 新唐書
KYL	<i>K'ai-yüan li</i> 開元禮
TCIC	<i>Tzu-chih t'ung-chien</i> 資治通鑑
TFYK	<i>Is'fu yüan-kui</i> 冊府元龜
THY	<i>T'ang hui-yao</i> 唐會要
TLT	<i>T'ang liu-tien</i> 大唐六典
TT	<i>T'ung-tien</i> 通典
TTCLC	<i>T'ang ta chao-ling chi</i> 唐大詔令集
WHTK	<i>Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao</i> 文獻通考
WYTH	<i>Wen-yüan ying-hua</i> 文苑英華

Table 1. Life-Spans of T'ang Emperors

EMPEROR	SERVICE AS HEIR-APPARENT	AGE AT ACCESSION	AGE AT DEATH
Kao-tsu	none	52	69
T'ai-tsung	none	27	50
Kao-tsung	6 yrs.	21	55
Chung-tsung (I)	3 yrs.	27	54
Jui-tsung (I)	none	22	54
Empress Wu		67	82
Chung-tsung (II)	none	49	
Jui-tsung (II)		48	
Hsüan-tsung		27	76
Su-tsung	2 yrs.	45	50
Tai-tsung	18 yrs.	35	52
Te-tsung	4 yrs.	37	53
Shun-tsung	15 yrs.	44	45
Hsien-tsung	26 yrs.	27	42
Mu-tsung	3 mos.	24	28
Ching-tsung	8 yrs.	14	17
Wen-tsung	13 mos.	17	30
Wu-tsung	none ^a	25	31
Hsüan-tsung	none	35	49
I-tsung	none	25	39
Hsi-tsung	none	11	25
Chao-tsung	none	21	47
Ai-tsung	none	12	15
	none		

NOTE: This table is based on the rulers' actual western-style ages, calculated on the basis of information in A. C. Moule, *The Rulers of China* (London, 1957).

^a Emperors from Wen-tsung onward were nominally appointed heir-apparent, but only immediately before their accession. They never actually served as heir.

Table 2. T'ang Emperors and Heirs-Apparent

EMPEROR (NO. OF SONS)	LI 李 HEIRS-APPARENT (FRAT. BIRTH ORDER)	H-A OUTCOME / OTHER REMARKS
Kao-tsu; r. 618-26 (22 sons)	Chien-ch'eng (1st) h-a. 618-26	murdered, 626
T'ai-tsung; r. 626-49 (14 sons)	Ch'eng-ch'ien (1st) h-a. 635-43 Chih (9th) h-a. 643-49	deg. 643; d. 644 suc. 649
Kao-tsung; r. 649-683 (8 sons)	Chung (1st) h-a. 652-56 Hung (5th) h-a. 656-75 Hsien (6th) h-a. 675-80 Che (7th) h-a. 680-83	deg. 656 d. 675 deg. 680 suc. 684, under empress Wu regency.
Chung-tsung; r. 694 (4 sons)	none	dethroned by Wu, 684
Jui-tsung; r. 684-90 Chung-tsung jr. bro.; Kao-tsung 8th son. (6 sons)	Ch'eng-ch'i (1st) h-a. 684-90	ceased h-a. when Wu dethroned Jui-tsung, 690.
<u>WU-CHOU DYNASTY</u>		
Empress Wu; r. 690-705	former Jui-tsung "imp. successor" & renamed Wu Lun, 690-98.	ceded position, 698
	former Chung-tsung h-a. 698	suc. 705
<u>RESTORED T'ANG</u>		
Chung-tsung; r. 705-10 (4 sons)	Ch'ung-chün (3d) h-a. 706-7 no h-a. 707-10	rebelled & killed, 707
[Wen-wang Chung-tsung 4th son.]		installed briefly by Wu, 710.
Jui-tsung; r. 710-12 abdicated, 712; "retired emperor," 712-13. (6 sons)	Lung-chi (2d) h-a. 710-12	suc. 712; with full powers, 713

Hsüan-tsung; r. 712-56 abdicated, 756; "retired emperor," 756-62. (30 sons)	none, 712-15 Ssu-ch'ien (3d) h-a. 715-37 Yü (3d) h-a. 738-56	condemned to suicide, 737 renamed Heng, 744; usurped throne, 756.	Hsi-tsung; r. 873-88 I-tsung 5th son (2 sons)	none	
Su-tsung; r. 756-62 (14 sons)	Yü (1st) h-a. 758-62	suc. 762	Chao-tsung; r. 888-904 Hsi-tsung jr. bro. I-tsung 7th son. (10 sons)	Yü (1st) h-a. 897-904	murdered, 904
Tai-tsung; r. 762-79 (20 sons)	K'uo (1st) h-a. 764-79	suc. 779	Ai-ti; r. 904-7 Chao-tsung 9th son	none	
Te-tsung; r. 779-805 (11 sons)	Sung (1st) h-a. 779-805	suc. 805	NOTE: h-a. = heir-apparent / served as heir-apparent deg. = degraded d. = died suc. = succeeded to imp. throne		
Shun-tsung; r. 805 abdicated, 805 (23 sons)	Ch'un (1st)	suc. 805			
Hsien-tsung; r. 805-20 (20 sons)	none, 805-09 Ning (1st) h-a. 809-11 Heng (3d) h-a. 812-20	d. 811 suc. 820			
Mu-tsung; r. 820-24 (5 sons)	Chan (1st) h-a. 822-24	suc. 824			
Ching-tsung; r. 824-27 (5 sons)	none				
Wen-tsung; r. 827-40 Ching-tsung jr. bro.; Mu-tsung 2d son. (2 sons)	Yung (1st) h-a. 832-38 none, 838-40	killed in palace, 838 .			
Wu-tsung; r. 840-46 Ching-tsung and Wen- tsung jr. bro.; Mu-tsung 5th son. (5 sons)	none				
Hsiuan-tsung; r. 846-59 Mu-tsung jr. bro.; Hsien-tsung 13th son. (12 sons)	none				
I-tsung; r. 859-73 Hsiuan-tsung 1st son (8 sons)	none				