Tang Studies

ISSN: 0737-5034 (Print) 1759-7633 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ytng20

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T'ang Studies 20-21 (2002-03)

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An immigrant monk from northern India named Amoghavajra 不空三藏 (705-774) served as Preceptor of State for three mid-Tang dynasty emperors, held ministerial court rank, and enjoyed lavish honors.[1] Earlier, in 638, a Nestorian Christian church was erected at the Tang capital by imperial decree, with the explanation that "the Tao has no constant name, the Sage has no constant form, and religions are established according to their [different] places."[2] Over the course of the entire dynasty the top executive office of Grand Councilor was filled by no fewer than forty-three persons of traceably nomadic (and therefore, in some eyes, not Chinese) Hu 胡 descent.[3] One recent study reveals that at least

An early draft of this paper was first presented at the 211th meeting of the American Oriental Society, in Toronto, March 2001.

[1] Zhipan (fl. 1269), *Fozu tongji*, T. 2035.49: 373c, 375c, and 377c-378a; *Song gaoseng zhuan* by Zanning (918-999) (*SKQS*), 1.9a-17b. For modern references, see Ikeda On, "Tōchō shogū gaizoku kansei ryakkō," *Zui-Tō teikoku to higashi Ajia sekai*, ed. Tōdaishi kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1979), 263; Kamata Shigeo, *Bukkyō denrai* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995), 201-2, 206; Qu Xiaoqiang, *Bai ma dong lai: Fojiao dongchuan jiemi* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1995), 96.

[2] *Tang huiyao*, comp. Wang Pu (922-982) (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), 49.864. On Nestorian Christianity in Tang, see also He Fangchuan and Wan Ming, *Gudai Zhong-Xi wenhua jiaoliu* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1993), 59-60.

[3] Lin Tianwei, *Sui-Tang shi xinlun* (Taibei: Donghua shuju, 1978), 74.

2,536 foreigners (*fan* 蕃) served as officers in the Tang army.[4] A Tang Protector General of Annan 安南都護 (in what is now northern Vietnam) sometime between 742 and 756 was a Central Asian merchant.[5] Another mid-eighth century Protector General of Annan, Abe no Nakamaro 阿倍仲麻呂 (ca. 698-770), had been born in Japan.[6]

As this scattering of examples illustrates, the Tang dynasty was an age of exceptional cosmopolitanism. The epitaph for a General of Sogdian descent who died at the capital in 682 captures something of the early Tang mood: "It is always said that, in antiquity, among gentlemen there was no division between Chinese and barbarian. When we examine later eras, heroes were no different in China or abroad." To suggest that no distinction whatsoever was made between Chinese and foreign is surely an exaggeration even for the early Tang dynasty. This general's Chinese-style mortuary inscription by itself is evidence less of indiscriminant multiculturalism than of assimilation, with a residual undercurrent of defensiveness concerning foreign origins. Contemporaries acknowledged, as emperor Taizong (r. 626-649) explained in 647, that in "antiquity everyone honored the Chinese and looked

[4] Zhang Qun, *Tangdai fan jiang yanjiu* (Taibei: Lianjing chuban, 1986), 37. Zhang also notes (p. 96), however, that 60% of this total seem to have been purely honorary diplomatic appointments.

[5] Xie Haiping, *Tangdai liu Hua waiguoren shenghuo kaoshu* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), 78; *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 225A.6425.

[6] Lin Wenyue, "Tangdai wenhua dui Riben Ping'an wentan zhi yingxiang: cong Riben qian Tang shi shidai dao *Bai shi wenji* zhi dong chuan," *Zhong-gu wenxue luncong* (Taibei: Da'an chubanshe, 1989), 382-84; Sugimoto Naojirō, "The Life of Abe no Nakamaro (Ch'ao Heng) as Commented on by Waley: A Critical Study," *Acta Asiatica* 17 (1969); *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6209.

down upon barbarians." But now, in early Tang, the Emperor boasted that he "loved them [all] as one."[7]

The case of the Tang official from Japan, Abe no Nakamaro, is especially intriguing. This was not some mere barbarian military auxiliary, colorfully entertaining exotic, or princely tribute-bearer. Instead, Abe was elevated to some of the most illustrious Chinese court circles on the strength of accomplishments in precisely those literary and cultural arenas that supposedly defined the very highest and most distinctive achievements of Chinese civilization. It could truly be said that Abe cut a finer figure as a Chinese gentleman than many native-born Chinese people did. Yet, at the same time, Abe also clearly never lost his sense of identification with the islands of his birth.

Abe's case is interesting also because it suggests a subtle yet significant shift from the cosmopolitan openness of the early Tang dynasty towards a less tolerant late-imperial Confucian universalism. The pluralistic world of early Tang China, where invidious distinctions were (allegedly) simply not made between Chinese (civilization) and foreign (barbarism), gave way in mid- and late Tang to a more narrowly judgmental definition of civilized behavior—one that was still supposedly "universal," in the sense of being theoretically open to anyone of sufficiently elegant achievement, but which was now an orthodoxy whose Tao did indeed have constant forms and names.

Abe no Nakamaro's career represents, simultaneously, both the extreme possibilities of Tang receptivity to foreign talent—a first generation immigrant who rose to high government office—and a growing insistence that accomplishment be defined in Chinese cultural terms. Abe, after all, may have been Japanese, but he

[7] Epitaph for Kang Moqie, *Tangdai muzhi huibian*, ed. Zhou Shaoliang and Zhao Chao (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 694. For such inscriptions as evidence of assimilation, see Chen Haitao, "Cong zangsu de bianhua kan Tangdai Sute ren de Han-hua," *Wen bo* 2001.3. *Zizhi tongjian* (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1956), 198.6247.

was welcomed and admired in mid-Tang China chiefly for his supposed desire to become Chinese.

Ironically, it is not unlikely that Abe, who was of relatively modest birth, rose higher in the Chinese government than he ever could have had he remained at home in Japan. Abe's unusual opportunity came to him when he was chosen, at the youthful age of roughly sixteen, to accompany the eighth Japanese embassy to Tang China as a student in 716-717.[8]

Upon arrival at the Tang capital in the autumn of 717, according to a report from the Court of State Ceremonial 鴻臚寺, the Japanese ambassador requested permission to visit the Confucian Temple. The embassy reportedly also asked to be allowed to "to follow various scholars and receive the classics," and eventually "traded all the gifts [they had received] for books with which to return" to Japan. This exemplary dedication to Confucian piety (as displayed in the Chinese accounts) closely approximated the stereotypical Chinese ideal of an encounter with barbarian emissaries. The Tang emperor had only recently, in 715, decreed that all foreign guests should be ushered into the Directorate of Educa-

bassy. Instead, taking a Chinese-sounding name (Chao Heng 朝衡), Abe remained in China for some fifty years. Even when "released to return home, he lingered and did not go." Actually, we know that Abe eventually did make at least one attempt to return to Japan, and it has been speculated that Abe was flatly refused permission by his Chinese hosts to return to Japan in 734, together with his departing companion Kibi no Makibi 吉備真吉備 (693-775), because, while Kibi was a solid scholar, Abe was a captivating literary talent who had caught the fancy of the Tang court.[10] If Abe spent the remainder of his life in China, therefore, it may not have been entirely a matter of his own choice.

At this point Abe appears in a role somewhat analogous to that of the earlier Japanese monk Benshō 辨正, who had arrived at the Tang court around 702 and won a warm welcome from this very same emperor (then only a prince) for his skill at the game of *weiqi* (J: *go*), comical nature, and conversational ability.[11] That is, these two talented Japanese may have functioned as little more than entertaining curiosities at the Chinese court. However, by the time he said farewell to Kibi no Makibi in 734, Abe no Nakamaro had already embarked upon a serious career of mounting stature within the Tang government.

Abe is mentioned in a poem written by a Chinese acquaintance, possibly soon after 720, as holding the Tang office of Editing Clerk (*jiaoshu* 校書). Although its rank was not especially high, this was obviously an office concerned with handling written documents, necessarily in the Chinese language. Shortly after Kibi no Makibi's departure, sometime between 734 and 751, Abe was made a "Princely Companion" 王友 for the Tang emperor's twelfth son. Whatever this meant in practice, according to its defi-

[10] *Jiu Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 199A.5341; Imaeda Jirō, 71. For Kibi no Makibi, see *Shoku Nihongi*, 33.458.

[11] *Kaifūsō*, attributed to Ōmi no Mifune (fl. 751) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1964), 96.

nition in the *Da Tang liudian*, a text that was compiled around this same time, Princely Companions were charged with the lofty-sounding responsibilities of "accompanying and serving" the Prince "in travels and at home, and advising him on morality."[12]

By 753 Abe was Director of the Palace Library (*bishu jian* 秘書監), a major literary position of rank 3b at the heart of the Tang empire. Although Charles Hucker observes that "from mid-T'ang on, the Directorship generally declined in importance, at times becoming little more than a sinecure," it is surprising nonetheless to see such a high Tang literary office awarded to a foreigner. A decade later, around 761, Abe had risen even further, to the position of Policy Advisor for the Chancellery 左散騎常侍, an office normally responsible for giving intimate advice to the emperor.[13]

As the poet Wang Wei 王維 (701-761) described Abe no Nakamaro in 753, he had "knotted his hair and wandered among sages. Shouldering his book pack and saying goodbye to his kin, he inquired about the rites from Lao Dan [Lao Zi], and studied poetry from Zixia [the disciple of Confucius]." Abe had left his home and family to pursue higher education in China. The story of his life was, therefore, apparently an almost ideal realization of China's literary civilizing mission as Confucius himself had described it long before: "If distant people do not submit, then cultivating the refining influence of literature will bring them."[14]

Abe no Nakamaro's most famous Tang appointment, however, may have been the one that was farthest away from the capital, on the remote southern frontier as Protector General of Annan in 766 to approximately 768. At the time, so-called "raw savages"

[12] *Da Tang liudian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 29.5b.

[13] Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1985), 376-77. For Abe's various appointments, see Imaeda Jirō, 57-58, 90, 98-99, 111; *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6209.

[14] *Wang Youcheng ji zhu* (Taibei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 12.2b-3a. *Lunyu zhushu* (*Shisanjing zhushu*), 16.64.

生蠻 were attacking the borders, and Abe had been assigned specifically to pacify those natives. Because of its exposed frontier conditions, this area, which was in the vicinity of modern Hanoi, had in 679 been redesignated a Tang "Protectorate of the Peaceful South" (C: Annan; V: Annam). The Tang Protector General was expected to undertake "the pacification, subjugation, and patrol" of the aboriginal tribes under his jurisdiction.[15] As a foreigner himself, it may have been felt that Abe no Nakamaro would be an especially good candidate for this office, uniquely qualified to mediate among the exotic tribesmen of far-off Vietnam. For, a half-century of service to the Tang court had not extinguished Abe no Nakamaro's Japanese identity. The poem that Wang Wei had earlier dedicated to Abe, in 753, had been written on the occasion of Abe's anticipated voyage back to Japan, aboard the ships of another Japanese embassy. Abe's return home was frustrated, however, when his vessel encountered adverse winds and was blown off course to the region of Vietnam, where tribespeople attacked and killed several members of the crew. Although both the Japanese ambassador and Abe no Nakamaro made it safely back to Tang China, neither ever returned to Japan.[16]

The personal familiarity with Vietnam that Abe might presumably have derived from this unexpected detour through the area in 753 may have been viewed as an additional special qualification for his appointment as Protector General a decade later in 766. Abe certainly knew this far-off southern land better than did most Tang court officials, for whom the "Peaceful South" remained very much a frightfully exotic frontier. Annan's lush tropical climate was widely regarded as being so unhealthy that people from the northern Chinese heartland who ventured into it

[15] For Abe, see *Annam chi luoc*, by Le Tac (fl. 1340) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 9.216; Imaeda Jirō, 181. On Annan, see *Tong dian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 32.186; *Xin Tang shu*, 43A.1111.

[16] Imaeda Jirō, 195 n. 1; *Shoku Nihongi*, 35.86.

"seldom returned alive." In 628 one gentleman even flatly refused a direct imperial assignment there.[17]

Abe no Nakamaro maintained at least sporadic ties with fellow Japanese throughout his many years in the service of Tang China. In 739 he helped repatriate the surviving members of yet another, earlier, Japanese embassy that had also been shipwrecked in Vietnam (evidently a recurring hazard). In 753, Abe was among the circle of Japanese who helped smuggle the Chinese monk Jianzhen 鑑真 (J: Ganjin; 687-763) from Yangzhou, without official permission, on what would become his sixth and finally successful attempt to transmit the proper Vinaya ordination ceremonies to Japan.[18]

Abe no Nakamaro did not, therefore, simply lose his Japanese identity and become "Chinese." He may, however, have properly been regarded as a Tang subject. Tang regulations specified that Japanese and Korean student monks who lingered in China for more than nine years would be enrolled in the official registries.[19] Abe was not a monk, but as a high government official he was obviously even more intimately involved with the Tang empire. Abe, in fact, was a member of the Tang ruling elite.

It must be remembered that Tang China was still a multiethnic empire, not an ethnically defined nation-state. The first imperial dynasty, Qin, had in 221 B.C. pulled together not merely all the formerly independent Chinese Warring States—among which, for example, even the pre-imperial Qin kingdom itself was al-

[17] "Shi dao zhi," *Taiping yulan* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1980), 172.970; *Annam chi luoc*, 9.208-209; *Dai Viet su ky toan thu*, by Ngo Si Lien (fl. 1479) (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku tōyō bunka kenkyūsho fuzoku, 1986), ngoai ky 5.158-59.

[18] *Shoku Nihongi*, 13.356. "Tō dai-oshō tōseiden," by Ōmi no Mifune (722-785), *Nara ibun*, ed. Takeuchi Rizō (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1967), 904.

[19] *Tang huiyao*, 49.863. See Guo Shaolin, *Tangdai shidafu yu fojiao* (Taibei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1993), 148-49.

ready a complex multi-ethnic composite—but also widespread aboriginal populations that had previously scarcely been Chinese in any meaningful sense of the word at all. This new Qin empire portrayed itself as nothing less than a realization of the ancient Zhou ceremonial posture of representing "All-under-Heaven" (*tianxia*). It was the boast of the First Qin Emperor that "wherever there are traces of men, there are none who are not my subjects."[20]

"All-under-Heaven" later became something of a formulaic label that was not always taken entirely seriously, but in the early Tang period the description once again, if only briefly, acquired a degree of plausibility. "The chieftains of the wildest places await the Tang seals and banners that enable them to be [established as legitimate] kingdoms," it was claimed.[21] An important point to notice is that in a truly universal state there would be no foreigners—merely an array of central officials, provincials, distant vassals, and loosely subject aboriginal tribes.

The Legalist Qin dynasty had supposedly attempted to apply sweepingly uniform regulations throughout the empire. From the beginning, it was interlaced with a multiplicity of different local communities, but as a matter of general policy the central government was eager to assume authority over—and tax—all populations in an approximately equal fashion. Both the imperial ambition, and the limits of its effective reach in practice, are illustrated by the following Tang edict of 721:

> Military bases in each of the frontier Circuits customarily manage native villages. The older households [among them] have long conformed [to proper Chinese customs], and are genu-

[20] On pre-conquest Qin, see Kudo Motoo, "Suikochi Shin bo chikukan no zokuhō ritsu o megutte," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 43.1 (1984). *Shi ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 6.245.

[21] *Xin Tang shu*, 219.6183.

> inely assimilated. The newly surrendered expect, even more, to be comforted and cherished.... Those [natives] who scatter, and have already departed, properly should be pacified. Those who [remain] present [within the empire] should be given added security. Assimilated households are the king's people. Their regulations should comply with state law.

The emperor thereupon commanded that, henceforth, subject native peoples should be permitted to memorialize the throne directly through their own emissaries, rather than indirectly through intermediary Chinese officials.[22]

Despite significant measures of bureaucratic standardization, the empire remained notable for its internal diversity. Nor was this an entirely undesirable contradiction even in theory. Conspicuous regional variation validated the imperial claim to be "All-under-Heaven." As John Fitzgerald comments, it was only when an attempt was made to re-conceive China along modern European lines as an ethnically cohesive nation-state in the early twentieth century that "the differences celebrated by the phrase 'all under Heaven' [came to] read as a catalogue of nationalist nightmares."[23]

Despite the pretense of universal rule, however, what the Qin and subsequent Han dynasties really established was not so much a genuine world-state as an enduring historical precedent for the

[22] *Cefu yuangui*, 992.11652. For non-Chinese tribes within the early empire, see Tang Changru, "Jin dai beijing gezu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji wu-Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," in his *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong* (1955; rpt. Sanlian shudian, 1978); Yü Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1967), esp. 85-86, 203; Zhu Dawei, "Nanchao shaoshu minzu gaikuang ji qi yu Hanzu de ronghe," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 1980.1.

[23] Fitzgerald, "'Reports of My Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated': The History of the Death of China," *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade and Regionalism*, ed. David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal (London: Routledge, 1994), 28.

political unity of roughly the geographic area that we now think of as "China." While this grand and admirable ideal of Chinese unity has never been forgotten or abandoned, following the terminal disintegration of the Han dynasty that began around 184, for some four hundred years (until 589) China ceased to be a single unified country. During this lengthy period of division, frontiers became fluid.

The spread of Indian Buddhism into the region at this time further undermined parochial boundaries. A monk from Koguryŏ (in what is now northern Korea and southern Manchuria), for example, studied the Mādhyamika at Dunhuang in the late fifth century, and was consulted as an authority by a Southern dynasty Chinese emperor in 512. In 623 a monk from Paekche (in what is now southwestern Korea) became the first official head of the Japanese Buddhist church. The cultic center devoted to Mañjuśrī that flourished in the Wutai mountains of modern north China attracted, among others, the Sillan (southeast Korean) pilgrim Chajang 慈藏 (ca. 636-645) and the Indian Buddhapālita in the seventh century, the Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (794-864) in the ninth, and inspired local imitation in both Korea and Japan. One variety of Vaiśravaṇa worship, apparently native to Khotan, was promoted at the Tang court by the Indian monk Amoghavajra in the eighth century, spread to Japan in the ninth, and by the tenth century had become a distinctive feature of the still largely autonomous, remote northeastern Japanese frontier.[24]

[24] For the monk from Koguryŏ, see Gao Guanru, "Zhongwai fojiao guanxi shilüe," *Zhongguo fojiao* 1 (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 1980), 200. On the appointment of 623, see *Nihon shoki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 22.164-65. For the Mt. Wutai cult, see Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, trans., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon Ryoiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), 39, 114-15; *Samguk yusa*, 3; T. 49:990c, 998b/c; Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998), 152-53. On Vaiśravaṇa worship in Japan, see Yiengpruksawan, 42.

The imperial dynasties that eventually reunified China in the sixth and seventh-centuries, then, had special reason for continuing to favor a vision of the empire as a multi-ethnic world-order. Their ruling houses sprang from a decidedly mixed frontier background—heirs to the semi-nomadic warriors who had dominated much of north China during the centuries of division. Seventh-century historians described those Northern dynasty conquerors as being of "motley sorts" 雜種. Twentieth-century historians conventionally labeled some of them "foreign races" or "nations."[25]

In reality, the ancestors of many of those warrior leaders had already lived within the borders of the Chinese empire for centuries prior to their rise to power, and they had acquired at least some of the trappings of Chinese civilization. They generally attempted to rule their upstart kingdoms and would-be empires very much in the "Chinese" style. Yet it is also true that the basis for their ascendance in an age of incessant warfare was nomadic-style military prowess as mounted archers, and some of them apparently long remained speakers of fundamentally non-Chinese languages.[26] The result was a complex hybridization. Sixth century Northern dynasties, for example, combined energetic revivals of "non-Chinese" steppe clothing, names and languages, with established Chinese imperial institutions, and reforms based quite self-consciously upon their reading of ancient Confucian classics.[27]

[25] *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 125.3134. Modern examples are Li Zefen, *Liang-Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwen ji* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1987), 1: 80; Miyazaki Ichisada, *Dai-Tō teikoku: Chūgoku no chūsei*, in *Miyazaki Ichisada zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993), 8:168.

[26] After the Tuoba Xianbei conquered the Central Plain they tried for some time to maintain the use of their own language as the language of military command, according to *Sui shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 32.947.

[27] Kawamoto Yoshiaki, "Kozoku no kokka," *Gi-Shin nambokuchō Zui-Tō jidaishi no kihon mondai*, ed. Gi-Shin Nambokuchō Zui-Tō Jidaishi no Kihon Mondai Henshū I-inkai (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), 96-97; Ma Changshou, *Wuhuan yu*

The ancestors of the Sui dynasty ruling family, who reunified China in 589, had lived for generations in what is now Inner Mongolia, and initially followed a Xianbei (Särbi) tribal leader to power in the Chinese heartland, taking a Xianbei name for themselves and intermarrying with the Xianbei elite. Some family members seem to have been at least intermittent speakers of the Xianbei language. And the Tang royal house, which seized power from Sui in 618, sprang from virtually identical origins. Even the name of the new dynasty, it has been suggested, may have been partially inspired by a non-Chinese steppe word, pronounced something like *tang*, meaning "dawn."[28]

The Xianbei chieftains whom the founders of the Sui dynasty had initially followed onto the Central Plain were surnamed Yuwen 宇文. Under the new Tang dynasty, this same Yuwen family continued to be influential, contributing three early Tang Grand Councilors. Another Xianbei family, the Zhangsuns 長孫, whose surname literally designated status as a senior branch of the Tuoba Xianbei clan, produced only one Tang dynasty Grand Councilor, but he held office for thirty-four years and was a pivotal figure at the early Tang court.[29]

Xianbei (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1962), 108; Scott Pearce, "Form and Matter: Archaizing Reform in Sixth-Century China," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, ed. Pearce et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard Univ., 2001).

[28] Chen Sanping, "A-gan Revisited: the Tuoba's Cultural and Political Heritage," *Journal of Asian History* 30.1 (1996): 52-55; Ma Chi, *Tang-dai fan jiang* (Xi'an: San Qin chubanshe, 1990), 7-8; *Nian'er shi zhaji*, by Zhao Yi (1795; rpt. Taibei: Huashi chubanshe, 1977), 15.319-320; Robert M. Somers, "Time, Space, and Structure in the Consolidation of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 617-700)," *Journal of Asian Studies* 45 (1986): 972; *Sui shu*, 1.1; *Xin Tang shu*, 1.1-2. On the name of the Tang dynasty, see Liu Yitang, "Tu-Hui minzu yu Han minzu wenhua guanxi zhi chutan," *Zhongguo xiyu yanjiu* (Taibei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1997), 240-48.

[29] *Xin Tang shu*, 71B.2403-7, 72A.2409, 2413, 2418. Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 14.

Such affiliations with the northern steppe frontier did not mean, however, that the early Tang ruling elite was "foreign," or "not Chinese." From neolithic times, Chinese identity had always been something of a composite, and during the period of division, among the multiple kingdoms and empires of that fragmented era, a kind of international community of shared (elite) tastes, outlooks, and training had emerged that transcended local political and ethnic divisions. While the interests, and even ethnic designations, of competing states varied, they all operated within an institutional and terminological framework that was to a surprising extent interchangeable. Whichever state controlled the Central Plain at any given time, moreover, was apt to present itself as the Middle Kingdom—that is, as China.[30]

The city that would become the Tang capital, Chang'an, had attracted immigrants from all directions since Qin times. By the fifth century, Audrey Spiro suspects, its residents "must have had considerable difficulty sorting out their ethnic origins and traditions (if, that is, they thought about them at all)." The Xianbei nomads who moved south onto the Central Plain not only acquired a Chinese cultural veneer; they began to depict themselves as descendants of the same legendary heroes (such as the Yellow Emperor) as their Chinese neighbors.[31] Unlike modern pseudo-

[30] See Kikuchi Hideo, "Sōsetsu: Kenkyū shiteki kaiko to tenbō," *Zui-Tō teikoku to higashi Ajia sekai*, ed. Tōdaishi kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1979), 73; Misaki Yoshiaki, "Iminzoku tōgyokan ni arawareta Goko shokoku no minzokukan," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 54.1 (1995).

[31] On Chang'an, see Li Hao, *Tang-dai Guanzhong shizu yu wenxue* (Taibei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1999), 45-47; Audrey Spiro, "Hybrid Vigor: Memory, Mimesis, and the Matching of Meanings in Fifth-Century Buddhist Art," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm* 145-46. For origin myths, see Cao Shibang, "Shi cheng 'wu-Hu yuan chu Zhongguo sheng wang zhi hou' de laiyuan," *Shihuo yue kan* n.s., 4.9 (1974); Tian Zhaoyuan, "Lun Beichao shiqi minzu ronghe guocheng zhong de shenhua rentong," *Shanghai daxue xuebao: She ke ban* 2000.3: 106-7.

scientific conceptions of mutually exclusive races, this premodern mythology of common descent made assimilation easy. New arrivals were simply long-lost kin. By the sixth century, the Xianbei court at Luoyang could reasonably present itself as a Chinese-style center towards which "merchant Hu and traders daily rush across the border [from west of the Pamirs].... Hence there are over ten-thousand families of assimilated citizens." By Tang times, such formerly nomadic families as the Zhangsuns were old established native residents of Luoyang, not "foreigners."[32]

Yet the undeniably peripheral origins of the Sui-Tang ruling families, and the multifarious components of their far-flung empire, did lend renewed credibility to the vision of China as a richly diverse All-under-Heaven. This was an age when semi-foreign frontier rulers could occupy Chinese imperial thrones, while thoroughly "Chinese" lands and peoples could coexist under rival "foreign" governments. Hebei—the region surrounding modern Beijing—had, for example, become the nucleus of an independent state in the sixth century. Even after its reabsorption into the unified Sui-Tang empires, the region appears to have long been suspected of potentially disloyal affiliations with Koguryŏ.[33]

The entire southern half of what we think of now as "China" had been home to independent dynasties for centuries—what Miyazaki Ichisada called the "other world" (*bettenchi*) of the Six Dynasties south—and at least initially had to be treated as something of a foreign conquest by the Sui and Tang re-unifiers. In 598 the first Sui emperor, fearing "aggression" from the "people of Wu and Yue" (ancient names of kingdoms in the lower Yangzi delta), ordered the confiscation of all large private southern shipping.

[32] *Luoyang qielan ji*, by Yang Xuanzhi, ca. 550 (Taibei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 3.5b. For the Zhangsuns, see Lei Jiaji, *Sui-Tang zhongyang quanli jiegou ji qi yanjin* (Taibei: Dongda tushu, 1995), 14.

[33] Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 76-77.

Two hundred years after the Sui-Tang reunification of the empire, in the early ninth-century, Liu Zongyuan, in exile from the north to what is now Hunan province, could still remark, "Voices are especially different [here] in Chu and Yue .... When they hear a northerner speak, they, twittering, go and hide."[34]

In the process of consolidating the vast Sui-Tang unified dynasties, various pieces of the empire long retained distinctive regional identities, and sometimes a fair degree of local autonomy. The Feng 馮 family in Canton, for example, assumed independent control over much of what is now Guangdong province, Hainan island, and a portion of Guangxi during the interval of confusion between Sui and Tang. Although they formally submitted to Tang in 622, the Feng family seems to have been able to maintain a degree of independent authority until as late as the end of the seventh century.[35]

Interestingly enough, the biographical account of the principal Feng family strongman was included in the "various foreign generals" 諸夷蕃將 section (*zhuan* 110) of the *Xin Tang shu*, together with the Türks Shi (Ashina, or Arśïla) Da'nai 史大奈 and Ashina She'er 阿史那社尒, the Tiele 鐵勒 (Türk) Qibi Heli 契苾何力, the Paekche Korean Hŭkchi Sangji 黑齒常之, the Koguryŏ Korean Chŏn Namsaeng 泉男生, the Malgal 靺鞨 Li Jinxing 李謹行, the Tibetan Lun Gongren 論弓仁, and others. This interesting historiographical juxtaposition brings us across an apparently almost imperceptible gradient from semi-independent regional Chinese strongmen to people who are more unequivocally not Chinese at all. Oddly enough, moreover, some of these non-Chinese generals

[34] Miyazaki Ichisada, 135; *Sui shu*, 2.43; *Liu Hedong quanji* (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1991), 30.328; *Xin Tang shu*, 168.5133.

[35] *Dai Viet su ky toan thu*, ngoai ky 5.158; *Sui shu*, 80.1800-1803; Wang Chengwen, "Tangdai 'nan xuan' yu Lingnan xidong haozu," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 1998.1: 97-98; *Xin Tang shu*, 90.3777, 110.4112-14; *Zizhi tongjian*, 193.6092.

made more faithful servants of the Tang dynasty than certain local Chinese strongmen did.

The Tang dynasty had begun as an armed uprising in what is now Shanxi province in the summer of 617, and it was not until about 629 that Tang authority over the bulk of China was reasonably consolidated. This empire-building process necessarily entailed the sweeping incorporation of vast territories and diverse populations. For the year 629 alone it is recorded that no fewer than 1,200,000 people of various description submitted to the new dynasty. Some of these new subjects, moreover, initially appeared quite exotic. After the surrender of the Eastern Türks in 630, for example, many of their leaders were given appointments at the Tang capital—"over a hundred persons receiving the fifth rank or higher, constituting nearly half of the gentlemen at court." Following the conquest of Koguryŏ, in 669 the Tang government allegedly redistributed as much as five percent of its former population to sparsely inhabited areas of the Chinese Empire.[36]

Many of the less thoroughly assimilated peoples continued to be administered only indirectly, under so-called "loose rein prefectures" (*jimi zhou* 羈縻州). In the early Tang dynasty no fewer than 856 of these largely autonomous tribal reservations were established, many of them deep in the heart of the empire in such places as modern Anhui, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, and Sichuan provinces.[37] By no means was the population

[36] *Xin Tang shu*, 2.31. *Zizhi tongjian*, 193.6078. *Samguk sagi*, by Kim Pu-sik (1145), annotated modern Korean translation by Ch'oe Ho (Seoul: Hongsin munhwasa, 1994), 1: 413 (Koguryŏ basic annals 10); *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6197. On Tang incorporation of diverse populations, see Fu Lecheng, "Tangdai Yi-Xia guannian zhi yanbian," in his *Han-Tang shi lunji* (Taibei: Lianjing chuban, 1991), 213; idem, "Tang xing wenhua yu Song xing wenhua," in *Tangdai yanjiu lunji*, vol. 1, ed. Zhongguo Tangdai xuehui (Taibei: Xin wenfeng chuban, 1992), 257.

[37] Li Shutong, *Sui-Tang shi biecai* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1995), 163; Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 2; *Xin Tang shu*, 43B.1119-20, 1137-38, 1140, 1144-45.

of the Tang empire all homogeneously "Chinese" in any ethno-racial sense. To the contrary, early Tang flirted instead with the alternate ideal of universality.

At the beginning of his reign Taizong lifted many of the barrier taxes and prohibitions, so that "public and private," "Chinese and foreigner," could come and go without obstruction. In 633 Taizong's father, the aging abdicated emperor Gaozu, commanded a captive Khagan of the Western Türks to do a dance, and a "southern barbarian chieftain" (from the Cantonese Feng family) to chant poems, remarking with a smile that "for Hu and Yue to be one family is something that has never happened since antiquity." Taizong responded with a toast: "That the four barbarians all come in today as vassals is entirely the result of Your Majesty's teachings and admonitions."[38]

In the mid-seventh century there were ten official categories of music and dance for court entertainment, eight of which were named after—and supposedly in the "native style" of—foreign kingdoms, or formerly foreign kingdoms that had been absorbed into the Tang empire. These court displays were obviously intended to highlight the range of Tang imperial influence.[39] Rapid expansion, initially, must have encouraged seemingly limitless ambitions.

Within the empire, the control of partially assimilated populations living along militarily strategic frontiers had to be especially sensitive. The early Tang commander-in-chief of Yingzhou 營州都督, northeast of modern Beijing, for example, was responsible for two administrative sub-units populated largely by Türks, ten populated by the Xi people 奚, seventeen by Kitans, and three by the Malgal. It was not uncommon to share administrative re-

[38] *Cefu yuangui*, 504.6047-48. *Zizhi tongjian*, 194.6103-4.

[39] Yan Shoucheng, "Lun sheng-Tang qixiang," in *Tang wenhua yanjiu lunwenji*, ed. Zheng Xuemeng and Leng Minshu (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1994), 39-40.

sponsibilities with reliable members of the local native elite. After the Tang conquest of Koguryŏ in 668, for example, former Koguryŏ leaders were selected to participate in the new Tang government of that far northeastern acquisition.[40]

In the northwest, after the Tang subjugation of Turfan in 640 a garrison of over one thousand troops was stationed there. It was also proposed, however, that it might be more cost-effective to exercise Tang dominion indirectly, instead, through the installation of an obedient native vassal. From the beginning of the Chinese ascendance in that far northwestern region in the last century B.C., indirect rule through vassals had been a well-established procedure.[41]

Archeological evidence confirms that by the mid-seventh century the Tang dynasty had operational postal stations west of Turfan, in the vicinity of Kucha. To consolidate Tang control over the western regions, beginning about 716 princes from the imperial family itself were appointed (absentee) administrators of what is now Xinjiang. At its peak, a degree of Tang authority may have extended as far west as the Oxus River (Amu Darya), and to the north shore of the Aral Sea. But the entire region west of the Pamir Mountains appears to have never been regularly garrisoned. The "Pamir Watch" (*Congling shouzhuo* 蔥嶺守捉) that was established in the early eighth century at modern Tashqurgan, southwest of Kashgar but still east of the crest of the Pamirs, may have been the westernmost permanent Tang garrison.[42]

[40] On Yingzhou, gateway to the far northeast, see Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 117; Shi Nianhai, *Tangdai lishi dili yanjiu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 510-11. For Koguryŏ, see *Samguk sagi*, 1: 413 (Koguryŏ basic annals 10).

[41] *Zizhi tongjian*, 196.6178. Zhou Hong, "Cong kaogu ziliao kan Han-Tang liangchao dui gudai Xinjiang de guanxia jingying," *Xinjiang shifan daxue xuebao: Zheshe ban* 2000.4: 40.

[42] Liu Anzhi, "Tangdai Anxi, Beiting liang ren Duhu kaobu: yi chutu wenshu wei zhongxin," *Wuhan daxue xuebao: Renwen kexue ban* 2001.1: 63-64; Xue

How to handle the various communities of Türks, Uighurs, Tanguts, Tuyuhun (a western branch of the Xianbei), and Tarim basin oasis communities such as Kucha, Khotan, Karashahr and Kashgar, all of which were at least nominally Tang territories, to say nothing of Central Asians living even further west, was almost as much a task for Tang diplomacy as it was for Tang administration. The Toquz-Oghuz Türkic rulers of the city-states in the Oxus-Jaxartes region, for example, are known to have dispatched at least 103 envoys to Tang.[43]

As a consequence of these kinds of diplomatic exchanges, a number of members of Central Asian royalty from both sides of the Pamirs became semi-permanent residents of the Tang capital. These princely visitors were cordially treated by their hosts, and often given Tang imperial titles.[44] Both in name and in reality, it is possible to imagine some of these foreign residents as gradually blending into the general Tang population.

In 787 it reportedly came to the attention of Tang officials that some four thousand Central Asian "guests" had been stranded by Tibetan military offensives that had severed their return routes home, and had been living in Chang'an comfortably at Tang government expense for up to four decades, often marrying Chinese women and acquiring real-estate. Since none of these people were reportedly willing to go home now, the royal Ambassadors among them were appointed Supernumerary Commanders of the Tang Metropolitan armies, and the remainder made ordinary sol-

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Zongzheng, "Lun Gao Xianzhi fa Shi-guo yu Daluosi zhi zhan," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao: Zheshe ban* 1999.3: 53; Zhang Guangda and Wang Xiaofu, *Tian ya ruo bilin: Zhongwai wenhua jiaoliu shilüe* (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 106. For the "Pamir Watch," see *Xin Tang shu*, 43B.1150.

[43] Fang Yaguang, *Tangdai dui wai kaifang chutan* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1998), 168.

[44] Han Xiang, "Tangdai Chang'an zhong-Yaren de juju ji Hanhua," *Minzu yanjiu* 2000.3: 64.

diers. In this fashion these foreign "guests" were converted into part of the regular Tang military establishment.[45]

A certain king of Khotan named Yuchi Sheng 尉遲勝 presented himself at the Tang court in the mid-eighth century, was given a Tang imperial bride, and later assisted in some of the Tang western military campaigns. Hearing of the great rebellion that battered the dynasty between 755 and 763, he reportedly entrusted the affairs of Khotan to a younger brother and personally rode to the assistance of the Tang at the head of five thousand men. Thereafter he dallied in the Tang capital and cultivated a substantial following of literati. Around 785, when it was proposed that he send his son back to Khotan to assume the throne, he demurred, arguing that his son "was born to metropolitan splendor, is unfamiliar with their customs [in his own supposedly 'native' Khotan], and cannot be sent."[46] The story seems to illustrate how it might be possible to slide from foreign potentate to resident member of the Chinese elite within only a couple of generations.

Similar techniques were employed to handle relations with native elites along both the northeastern and northwestern frontiers. A member of the Sillan royal family, from what is now Korea, named Kim In-mun 金仁問 went to the Tang court to serve in the imperial bodyguard in 651. He later played a role in coordinating the joint Tang-Sillan conquests of the other two independent kingdoms located on the Korean peninsula, Paekche, in 660, and Koguryŏ, in 668, and then mediated the subsequent rupture between the victorious Tang and Sillan allies—in the process supposedly declining a Tang offer to install himself on the Sillan throne. Kim finally died at the Tang capital in 694.[47]

In the meantime, the king-maker of Koguryŏ had died around 666, leaving the position to his son Chŏn Namsaeng 泉男生. Nam-

[45] *Zizhi tongjian*, 232.7492-93.

[46] *Xin Tang shu*, 110.4127-28.

[47] *Samguk sagi*, 1:109-10, 120-21 (Sillan Basic Annals 5-6); 2: 342-43 (Yŏl chŏn 4).

saeng fell out with his own younger brothers, however, and defected to Tang with a force of Koguryŏ, Kitan and Malgal troops. He then participated in the final subjugation of his own former kingdom, for which he was rewarded with a Tang appointment. His son subsequently rose to high military office at the Tang court. The story is told that around 691, when this son was selected to participate in an archery contest sponsored by Empress Wu, he declined, noting that all of the archers who had been chosen were "not Chinese" 皆非華人.[48] This grandson of the Koguryŏ king-maker evidently preferred to be counted among the Chinese gentlemen.

Precisely because military careers were viewed as beneath the dignity of top Chinese literati, however, it was exactly as soldiers that men from the distant frontiers typically found positions in the service of the Tang. A key component of the original military power base of the Tang ruling house had been a small elite striking force trained in the lifestyle and tactics of the Türkic steppe nomads. The Türkic General Ashina Da'nai was indispensable to the initial Tang victory, and Ashina She'er, a generation later, spearheaded the successful Tang expansion into the Tarim basin. Throughout its entire history the Tang dynasty continued to rely heavily upon such "foreign" warriors for imperial defense.[49]

Some of these military men remained both unambiguously "foreign," and remarkably loyal to the Tang dynasty. The Tiele (Türk) Qibi Heli (d. 677), for example, submitted to the Tang together with his mother and a thousand followers in 632. His little band was settled in the strategic northwestern Gansu corridor, and he became a Tang General. When the Xueyantuo 薛延陀 tribe became ascendant in the region a decade later, some of Qibi Heli's

[48] *Samguk sagi*, 1:411 (Koguryŏ basic annals 10); *Xin Tang shu*, 110.4123-24, 220.6187-88, 220.6196-97.

[49] Ikeda On, "Gaizoku kansei," 265; Li Shutong, *Sui-Tang shi biecai*, 59; Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 15-22, 101, 112-13.

fellow tribesmen thought it might be advantageous to align with them. Qibi Heli, however, refused, supposedly insisting "I am loyal to my lord," the Tang emperor. Seized by his own people and brought before the rival Khagan, Qibi Heli still adamantly refused to switch allegiance, (allegedly) exclaiming, "how could a Tang martyr be humiliated in a caitiff court?"[50]

The Malgal tribes lived in the forests to the north of Koguryŏ. As late as the sixth century the eastern Malgal still reportedly tipped their arrows with stone, wore skins, lived by hunting, and washed (the Chinese sources say) in urine. During the wars between the Sui-Tang Chinese dynasties and Koguryŏ, one small Malgal band allied with the Chinese empire, eventually settling in the vicinity of modern Beijing. In the mid-seventh century their chieftain was awarded the Tang imperial surname, Li, and their second generation leader Li Jinxing won important military victories for Tang against Koguryŏ restoration forces to the east, in 673, and against the Tibetans to the west, in 676, for which he was made a Tang duke.[51]

The liquidation of the independent kingdoms of Paekche, in 660, and Koguryŏ, in 668, released a considerable number of native leaders from the Korean peninsula to serve the Tang dynasty in military careers. Hŭkchi Sangji, a onetime Paekche loyalist, is an example of this pattern. By 664 he had irrevocably submitted to Tang, and was appointed as a Tang prefect in what is now Shaanxi province, in northwest China. Over the following years, especially from 678 into the 680s, Hŭkchi rose to prominence in Tang campaigns against Tibet, for which he was awarded ducal

[50] *Xin Tang shu*, 110.4117-19; *Zizhi tongjian*, 194.6099, 196.6180.

[51] *Samguk sagi*, 1:413 (Koguryŏ basic annals 10); *Sui shu*, 81.1821-22; *Xin Tang shu*, 110.4122-23.

status, although he was ultimately accused of rebellion and forced to commit suicide.[52]

The alacrity with which certain persons from the Korean peninsula shifted their allegiance to Tang China may seem puzzling, even treasonous, from a modern nationalist perspective. Koguryŏ's (glorious, but ultimately futile) earlier seventh-century victories over Sui and Tang armies are today proudly celebrated as patriotic examples of "the resistance of the Korean people to foreign aggression." But the Koguryŏ king had been murdered by other members of the Koguryŏ elite in 642.[53] The later Koguryŏ strongman Namsaeng, as we have seen, quarreled with his own family and aligned with Tang (and fellow "Korean" Silla) in the campaigns that liquidated Koguryŏ in 668. It is not clear that service to Koguryŏ's triumphant rival Silla, thereafter, would have necessarily appeared more "patriotic" to the vanquished Koguryŏans than building a new home for themselves within the cosmopolitan Tang empire.

In early Tang, native generals commonly commanded auxiliary military units composed largely of their own people, in their capacity as local chieftains. Detachments of nomadic cavalry also long retained a quite sharply separate identity from the general Chinese population. After about 636, however, as the Tang dynasty began requiring soldiers to engage in agricultural work, the distinction between mounted warrior and farmer began to blur. By the end of the seventh century, a number of former Koguryŏ generals, in particular, were commanding regular Tang armies without any appreciable native components.[54]

[52] *Samguk sagi*, 2:350 (Yŏl chŏn 4); *Xin Tang shu*, 110.4121-22. See Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 118-19.

[53] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, tr. Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 48.

[54] Ma Changshou, 74, 105-107, 109. Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 128-29.

Gao Xianzhi 高仙芝 (d. 755) may be the supreme example of this phenomenon. Although Gao was still explicitly referred to as a Koguryŏan, and once disparaged as a mere "Koguryŏ slave" 高麗奴, Koguryŏ had probably already ceased to exist as an independent kingdom even before he was born. Gao's father had served in the Tang western garrisons, and Gao followed his father to Kucha, where he established his own reputation in the nomadic art of mounted archery. It was Gao Xianzhi who then led the Tang armies to their high-water-mark capture of Tashkent in 750, but also to their disastrous defeat by the forces of Islam at the battle of Talas, in Central Asia, in 751. When An Lushan (ca. 703-757) rebelled against the Tang dynasty in 755, Gao Xianzhi loyally tried to hold a strategic pass in what is now Shaanxi province against the rebel armies. Despite his loyalty, however, he was killed by imperial command in 755 as punishment for his defeats.[55]

An Lushan's rebellion is widely regarded as a watershed event in Chinese history. Among other consequences, the rebellion is supposed to have almost immediately ushered in a chilly new climate of xenophobia and isolationism. In one particularly horrifying example, in 761 there was a massacre in a northern city of anyone who even looked like a Hu. "Infants were cast into the air and caught on spears. Those with high noses, resembling Hu, who were killed mistakenly were very many." Yet this ghastly atrocity was apparently not precipitated by popular anti-foreign sentiments or bitter ethnic hatred. Instead, it was a calculated military maneuver, encouraged by rewards, in a clash between rival armies, one of which happened to be predominantly Hu in composition.[56]

[55] *Xin Tang shu*, 135.4576-79.

[56] *Zizhi tongjian*, 222.7108-12; *Xin Tang shu*, 225A.6432. For xenophobia, see Fu Lecheng, "Zhongguo minzu yu wailai wenhua," *Han-Tang shi lunji* (1969; rpt. Taibei: Lianjing chuban, 1991), 397; Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1963), 10.

Prohibition of the foreign religions of Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism during the Huichang reign period (841-46) may be a representative episode of post-An Lushan xenophobia. If so, however, it was a notably belated and fleeting spasm. Buddhism certainly recovered, and although it may have thereafter been somewhat marginalized by a growing preference for Neo-Confucianism, the Song (960-1279) dynasty actively restored imperial patronage for Buddhist translation projects, and in the 960s dispatched a number of pilgrims to India and the western regions that has been called "the largest in the history of Chinese Buddhism." Moreover, three decades after the Huichang-era purge of Zoroastrianism, the tomb inscription for the daughter of one cavalry officer who died near the Tang capital in 874 still refers to Ahura Mazda, suggesting that she was a Zoroastrian, and is partially written in Pahlavi, a medieval Persian language.[57] Even towards the end of the dynasty, Tang society was still surprisingly diverse.

An Lushan may have been born in a felt tent to a Sogdian father and Türkic mother, but his rebellion arose from a Tang imperial base in the northeast, near modern Beijing, far from his own quasi-foreign western origins. As Zhao Bingwen 趙秉文 (1159-1232) poignantly observed in the thirteenth century, if not for the emperor's fatal self-indulgence, An Lushan might have remained "merely a servile shepherd 一牧羯奴耳." If his rebel armies had a foreign complexion, that was largely only because, since the abandonment of the old citizen conscript army in late Han times, soldiers in Chinese armies had become paid professionals who

[57] Lin Wushu, "Tang-chao san yijiao zhengce lunlüe," *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998): 9-12. Huang Chi-Chiang, "Imperial Rulership and Buddhism in the Early Northern Sung," in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, ed. Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1994), 149-52, 155, 157-58; also Han Xiang, 69-70.

were often recruited from minority or other marginal population groups.[58]

Among these rough recruits, northern frontiersmen trained in the deadly art of mounted archery—such as even the "female Hu slave, skilled at archery 胡婢善射," whom one official tried to entice into service at the end of the second century—proved especially effective in combat.[59] To a large extent, the rise of frontier warriors should be understood more as a challenge to the center from the periphery than as a genuinely foreign menace. They were not so much non-Chinese as rival Chinese contestants for power.

An Lushan may have sprung from frontier ("foreign") origins, but so did nearly all the other Tang regional military commissioners of his day, many of whom rallied loyally to the defense of the dynasty. Geshu Han 哥舒翰, for example, was a western Türk from the Ili River region whose mother was a Khotan princess. In 752 An Lushan had supposedly even tried to establish a cordial relationship with Geshu by remarking on their common ethnic origins. But Geshu was aligned with factional opponents of An Lushan at the Tang court, and, when An Lushan rebelled, Geshu led Tang loyalist troops against the rebels. He was not very successful, but the foremost military figure in the eventual suppression of the rebellion, Li Guangbi 李光弼 (708-764), also was a frontiersman, the son of a Kitan chieftain.[60]

[58] Guo Shaolin, 382-83. Zhao Bingwen (1159-1232), "Tang lun," *Xianxian laoren fushui wenji* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1979), 14.13b-14a. For the changing composition of the army, see Miyazaki Ichisada, 166; Tonami Mamoru and Takeda Yukio, *Zui-Tō teikoku to kodai Chōsen, Sekai no rekishi*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Chuokoron-sha, 1997), 125.

[59] Zhao Qi (d. 201), *Sanfu juelu*, quoted in *Chu xue ji*, ed. Xu Jian (659-729) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 19.465.

[60] Pan Yihong (*Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbors* [Bellingham: Western Washington Univ. Press, 1997], 155) writes that "except for Jiannan, all the Military Commissioners were non-Chinese...." On Ge-

Since ethnic minorities were as active in the suppression of the rebellion as they were as participants in it, the event did not in fact precipitate any clear polarization between ethnic groups within the empire. In 757, one Toquz-Oghuz Türk from the Gansu region even petitioned to be allowed to change his name from An to (the Tang imperial family name) Li, because he was "ashamed" to bear the same surname as An Lushan.[61]

Foreign students continued to be drawn to Tang China even after An Lushan's rebellion, although it may be true that fewer of these students now came from Japan. Abe no Nakamaro may have been both the first and the last person from Japan ever to attain a top academic degree in premodern China.[62]

As Chu Guangxi 儲光羲 (ca. 706-763) observed in a poem dedicated to Abe, "Of the myriad kingdoms coming to our [Tang] court, the road from the eastern corner [Japan] is the longest." After Abe, although several Japanese monks did pay celebrated visits to China in the early ninth century, they seldom lingered very long. In 806 another Japanese student, Tachibana Hayanari 橘逸勢 (d. 842), who had apparently come to the Tang capital with the intention of remaining for up to twenty years, requested instead to be allowed to return home after scarcely a year in Chang'an, his letter of explanation (which someone had to write for him) indicating inability to communicate as one reason for leaving early. In 839 three Japanese students and a ship's officer fled into hiding rather than obey a Japanese imperial order to accompany an em-

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shu Han, see Li Shutong, *Sui-Tang shi biecai*, 169; Pulleyblank, *An Lu-shan*, 10-11; *Xin Tang shu*, 135.4569-74. For Li Guangbi, see *Xin Tang shu*, 136.4583-90.

[61] Ma Chi, "Shilun fan ren shi Tang zhi sheng, ji qi xingming zhi Hanhua," in *Tang wenhua yanjiu lunwenji*, ed. Zheng Xuemeng and Leng Minshu (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1994), 101; *Xin Tang shu*, 138.4619.

[62] Nakamura Shintarō, *Ri-Zhong liangqian nian: Renwu wanglai yu wenhua jiaoliu*, tr. Zhang Baixia (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1980), 65, 67.

bassy to Tang. Before the end of the ninth century the Japanese simply stopped sending official embassies to China.[63]

Yet many Koreans, especially, did continue to follow in Abe no Nakamaro's path. Some ninety Sillans (Koreans) are known to have passed the Confucian civil service examinations in China during roughly the last century of the Tang dynasty. Several of these served as Tang officials before returning home, some—such as Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn 崔致遠 (born 857)—to become voices for Confucian-style reform in Silla. It is difficult to determine how the total number of Korean students in late Tang China compares with the "over 8,000" Koreans and other foreigners who had reportedly been studying at the early Tang capital in the seventh century. Yet high-level achievement in the Confucian examination system does seem more characteristic of the later period, and the great Confucian transformation of Korean civilization was only just beginning to accelerate at this time.[64]

Apart from students, there were noticeable communities of Sillan residents in several ninth-century Tang cities, reaching as

[63] *Quan Tang shi, guangxuan, xinzhu, jiping*, ed. Yuan Lükun (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), 3:42. Kūkai (774-835), for example, spent only fourteen months at the Tang capital (see Stanley Weinstein, "The Beginnings of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan: The Neglected Tendai Tradition," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34.1 [1974]: 179.) For Tachibana, see Huang Yuese, "Riben liu Tang xuesheng Ju Yishi shiji kao," *Huang Yuese, Sui-Tang shi lunji*, ed. Liu Jianming (1993; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 121-23, 133. The incident in 839 comes from *Shoku Nihon kōki* (869; rpt. Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1897), 8.255. For the cancellation of the last embassy in 894, see Ishii Masatoshi, 96.

[64] Ikeda On, "Zui-Tō sekai to Nihon," *Kodai o kangaeru: Tō to Nihon*, ed. Ikeda On (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1992) 6. Fang Yaguang, 22-23; Kim Ch'ungnyŏl, *Gaoli Ruxue sixiang shi* (Taibei: Dongda tushu, 1992), 46-48; Ki-baik Lee, 94, 105-6; *Samguk sagi*, 2: 381-82 (Yŏl chŏn 6). For the seventh-century foreign student population, see *Xin Tang shu*, 198.5636.

far inland as Dunhuang.[65] Coming from the other direction, Central Asians also remained active in overland trade. Uighur Manichean religious institutions were still being built deep within the Tang heartland as late as 807.[66] And a burgeoning maritime trade brought increased numbers of Persian and Arab merchants to southern Chinese ports from mid-Tang times. Direct maritime trade with the Abbasid caliphate began only in the late eighth century, after An Lushan's rebellion, and continued to flourish well into the thirteenth century. In Zhang Guangda's 張廣達 opinion, "the Song dynasty treated Arab merchants even more generously than the Tang."[67]

The ninth-century tale "The Old Man of the Eastern Wall" 東城老父傳 is surely mistaken, as Robert Joe Cutter points out, in asserting that there had been "no alien guests" living permanently in the capital in the halcyon days before An Lushan's rebellion, but the story provides contemporary testimony of the (continued) presence of foreigners after the rebellion: "Now the northern Hu live intermingled with the people of the capital, taking wives and having children." The fact that in the ninth century this foreign

[65] Chen Shangsheng, "Tangdai de Xinluo qiaomin shequ," *Lishi yanjiu* 1996.1: 161-62, 164; Iwami Kiyohiro, "Tōdai gaikoku bōeki, zairyū gaikokujin o meguru shomondai," *Gi-Shin nambokuchō Zui-Tō jidaishi no kihon mondai*, ed. Gi-Shin Nambokuchō Zui-Tō Jidaishi no Kihon Mondai Henshū I-inkai (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), 80-81.

[66] Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories: A Study in Sino-Uighur Relations, 744-840* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1972), 49; *Tang huiyao*, 49.864.

[67] Zhang Guangda, "Haibo lai Tianfang, silu tong Dashi: Zhongguo yu Alabo shijie de lishi lianxi de huigu," *Xiyu shi, di, conggao chubian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 431-34. See also He Fangchuan and Wan Ming, 46-48; Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1983), 149; Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade: The Early History of the Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (1958; rpt. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998), 96-101.

presence was regarded as a symptom of dynastic decline does, however, provide a certain amount of corroboration of "nascent sinocentric xenophobia."[68]

After An Lushan's rebellion the range of foreign admirers and adventurers who were drawn to the weakened late Tang court was undoubtedly more attenuated, and there were fewer new Chinese military conquests to inject distinctly foreign populations into the imperial mix. On the contrary, an aggressively expanding Tibetan empire overran Tang outposts in the Tarim basin such as Kashgar, Khotan, and Kucha. Occasionally foreign threats were beaten back. Especially along the southwestern frontier after 794 some entirely new tributaries were even acquired. But the Tang was now militarily on the defensive, and even Uighur "allies" of the late-Tang court often seemed more like fearsome alien marauders than loyal vassals.[69]

Yet, if the turmoil resulting from An Lushan's rebellion drove Tang foreign relations to a low point, oddly enough, Fang Yaguang 方亞光 also observes that government officials of foreign origin became, if anything, more common in mid-to-late (post-rebellion) Tang. Abe no Nakamaro, for example, rose to the office of policy advisor for the chancellery only after the rebellion.[70]

[68] Robert Joe Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106.3 (1986): 514, 520, and n. 125. *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 485.3995.

[69] On Uighur "allies," see Li Shutong, "Tangdai jieyong waibing zhi yanjiu," *Tang shi suoyin* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1988), 201-9; *Xin Tang shu*, 217A.6116, 6119. For new tributaries, see Charles Backus, *The Nan-Chao Kingdom and T'ang China's Southwestern Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 97-98.

[70] Compare Fang Yaguang, 181-85, with idem, 21. Xie Haiping (pp. 79-80) claims that foreigners began to ascend to the rank of Grand Councilor only after the mid-8th century. For Abe's whereabouts during the rebellion, see Ning Zhixin, "Abei Zhongmalü Shu zhong binan shuo zhiyi," *Tang wenhua yanjiu*

The quotation that Fang cites as evidence for a higher foreign profile in late Tang government—"recently [847-874] all the [Grand Councilors in the] Secretariat have been barbarians" (attributed to Cui Shenyou 崔慎由, or 猷, Grand Councilor ca. 847-60)—requires closer scrutiny, however. In fact, none of the identifiable individuals whom Cui denounced (in the complete quotation) as "barbarian" were really foreigners in any literal sense (as the Japanese-born Abe no Nakamaro had been). Xie Haiping 謝海平 even concludes emphatically that they "are all Han [Chinese]." The principal detectable difference between these "barbarians" and Cui himself was that while Cui came from an illustrious clan that produced no fewer than twenty-three Tang Grand Councilors, each of these "barbarians" came from a family that produced only one.[71] In other words, the glaring distinction seems to have been more a matter of aristocratic good breeding than race, nationality, or ethnicity.

If we look more closely at the first of the officials mentioned by Cui, Secretariat Director Bai Minzhong 白中[書]令[敏中], we note that he was a cousin of the poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846). Bai Juyi is one of the most renowned literary figures in all of Chinese history, yet it is also true that some scholars do describe him as a "sinified nomad" 漢化胡人. The Bai clan's ancestral homeland, in modern Shanxi province, had been the approximate seat in previous centuries of several of the semi-nomadic conquest Northern dynasties. One ancestor, Bai Jian 白建 (d. 576), had served the Northern Qi dynasty (550-77) as a cavalry officer. After An

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lunwenji, ed. Zheng Xuemeng and Leng Minshu (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1994).

[71] Fang Yaguang, 21. The source is Sun Guangxian (d. 968), *Bei Meng suo yan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 5.32. Xie Haiping, 80. (See also Ikeda On, "Gaizoku kansei," 265.) Family information is from *Xin Tang shu*, 72C.2744, 72C.2817, 75B.3412-13, 75B.3417-19, 114.4198-99, 119.4305-7, 181.5351-52, 183.5379-80.

Lushan's rebellion Shanxi once again sometimes came to be thought of as a notably "barbaric" region. And some scholars speculate that the Bai clan may have originally hailed from even more remote western origins in Kucha.[72]

There may therefore, indeed, have been a hint of "barbarian" ancestry in Secretariat Director Bai's family tree. But by the ninth century he and his more famous cousin Bai Juyi could hardly have been considered foreigners. Perhaps the point is really that by mid-late Tang a great many people of originally "foreign" ancestry had become Chinese.

One of the early champions of the post-An Lushan intellectual ferment that generated Neo-Confucianism was Dugu Ji 獨孤及 (725-777). Dugu was well known to have been a descendant of steppe nomads, yet such alien ancestry seems to have been quite irrelevant to his career as a distinguished late-Tang Chinese scholar. Indeed, even his younger and more famous colleague Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824)—the very personification of supposed late-Tang xenophobic Neo-Confucian tendencies—traced his ancestry back to mounted archers from the semi-nomadic Northern dynasties.[73]

Han Yu's notorious denunciation of Buddhism in 819 as "merely one barbarian doctrine" would appear to be clear confirmation of late-Tang "anti-foreignism"—except that expressions of

[72] Li Hao, 131; *Xin Tang shu*, 119.4300, 148.4790; Zhang Guangda and Wang Xiaofu, 107, 120. For Bai Jian, see *Bei Qi shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 40.532-33.

[73] Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), 110, 118; Kuang Shiyuan, *Guo shi lunheng, di yi ce: xian-Qin zhi Sui-Tang pian*, rev. ed. (Taibei: Liren shuju, 1995), 373; David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), 309-311, 320; *Xin Tang shu*, 75B.3437, 3441; 162.4990-93. For Han Yu, see Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 17-19.

disdain for Buddhism on the grounds that it was foreign were as old as Chinese Buddhism itself. Similar objections had already been voiced in the fourth century, the fifth century, the sixth century, and even at the early seventh-century height of Tang cosmopolitanism. In 621 Fu Yi 傅奕 (555-639), for example, complained of "Confucian scholars in their studies who nevertheless speak the nonsensical language of weird barbarians."[74] It should not too easily be assumed, therefore, that Han Yu's ninth-century critique of Buddhism marks the beginning of some general anti-foreign shift in Chinese attitudes.

Han Yu also denounced native Chinese Taoism in almost identical terms, and pointedly observed that "When Confucius composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, he treated the various lords who used barbarian ritual as barbarians, and those who approached the Middle Kingdom as Chinese." While a distinction was clearly made between Chinese and barbarian, therefore, it was not conceived of in the familiar modern terms of ethnicity, race, or nationality. For Han Yu, civilization was a matter of adherence to universal Confucian truths, and was therefore theoretically open to anyone. As another late Tang scholar put it around 850, inspired by the example of an Arab attaining the prestigious *jinshi* degree, "Someone who was born in barbarian regions, but

[74] "Lun Fogu biao," *Han Changli quanji* (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1991), 39.456. This was labeled "anti-foreignism" in the first edition of *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1, ed. de Bary et al. ([New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960], 371-72) (see also Fu Lecheng, "Zhongguo minzu," 400), but for the revised second edition (1999) the allegation was omitted. For 4th, 5th, and 6th-century comparisons, see *Quan Jin wen*, 20.1569, in *Quan shanggu, Sandai, Qin, Han, Sanguo Liuchao wen*, ed. Yan Kejun (1762-1843) (Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1981), 20.1569; *Wei shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 114.3034; *Guang hongming ji*, by Daoxuan (596-667) (Taibei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1966), 10.2a. Fu Yi's complaint is from *Guang hongming ji*, 11.1b.

whose behavior conforms to ritual and justice, is barbarian in appearance but Chinese in his mind."[75]

Three of the ephemeral post-Tang tenth-century "Five Dynasties" were founded by Shatuo 沙陀 Türks. Yet, by the tenth century, these Türks had become so thoroughly Sinified that they exhibited a certain Sinocentric pride in their own relations with more remote "barbarian" kingdoms. Still later, reflecting upon his life under "foreign" Jurchen rule in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Zhao Bingwen concluded that "Han [China] means an All-under-Heaven that is open to everyone" 漢者公天下之言也].[76]

Long after An Lushan's rebellion, late imperial China remained a surprisingly open, inclusive, society. At the same time, however, belief in the ideal propriety of hierarchical order, at the summit of which there could only be one legitimate Son of Heaven, had also always been part of the classical tradition. If civilization was universal, it was also unitary and hierarchical. Significantly, Tang China was notable not only for its cosmopolitanism but also for its predilection for orthodoxy—observable even in the emergence of a new patriarchal Chan (J: Zen) sect of Buddhism.[77]

[75] Han Yu, "Yuan dao," *Han Changli quanji*, 11.174. Chen An, "Hua xin," *Quan Tang wen* (1814; Taibei: Datong shuju, 1979), 767.10094. See also Hartman, 158-59; Tanaka Toshiaki, "Kan Yu: Mōshi o sonsūshita Bukkyō kōgekisha," *Chūgoku shisō shi*, ed. Hihara Toshikuni (Tokyo: Perikan sha, 1987), 395.

[76] Fu Lecheng, "Shatuo zhi Han-hua," *Han-Tang shi lunji* (1965; rpt. Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1991). Zhao Bingwen, "Shu-Han zhengming lun," *Xianxian laoren fushui wenji*, 14.10b; Peter K. Bol, "Chao Ping-wen (1159-1232): Foundations for Literati Learning," in *China under Jurchen Rule: Essays on Chin Intellectual and Cultural History*, ed. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1995), 127.

[77] Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, tr. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 1, 10. Hart-

In Confucian eyes, anyone potentially could become civilized, but the standards of civilization were fixed, and often expressed in very specific details of ritual or clothing. Rivalry for political influence in early seventh-century Turfan between the Chinese empire, Türkic khans, and local royalty, for example, at one point hinged upon a choice of fashions, with the Sui emperor (unsuccessfully) ordering Turfan to "cast aside those felts and furs, and return to being a [civilized] country of caps and sashes" (冠帶之國).[78]

In the eighth century, Abe no Nakamaro's admirer Wang Wei also praised the memory of the Shatuo Türkic "Lady of the Shan Kingdom" 沙陀鄯國夫人 (in modern Xinjiang) for adopting civilized garb:

> The Lady submitted [to Tang], and warfare thereupon ceased.... They changed their [barbarous] garments that button on the left, loosened their [barbaric] queues and let fall dressed coils, unfastened their furs and put on brocade.... Han [Chinese] institutions do not follow barbarian terms.... Wherever the teachings of justice reach, loyalty and good faith prevail.[79]

In evaluating other people's levels of "Civilization," such highly visible items as clothing often weigh equally with intangible ideals like justice.

These attitudes do not appear suddenly after An Lushan's rebellion; they had been discernible all along. More broadly, however, over the centuries of Sui-Tang unity, Chinese cultural iden-

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man, 5-8, notes several points of convergence between Chan and Han Yu's Confucian orthodoxy.

[78] *Sui shu*, 83.1847-48. Sekio Shiro, "'Giwa seihen' zenshi: Kōshō kokuō Kiku Hakuga no kaikaku o chūshin toshite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 52.2 (1993).

[79] "Wei Wang Changshi ji Shatuo Shan'guo furen wen," *Wang youcheng ji zhu*, 27.8a/b. The "Lady of Shan" received that title in 714. See *Xin Tang shu*, 218.6154.

tity may have begun to consolidate somewhat. As the stream of foreign delegations arriving from northwestern regions subsided, Central Asians who remained in Tang acquired Chinese-style names and became increasingly indistinguishable from other Chinese. The grandsons of the western Türk Geshu Han, for example, "all became known for Confucianism" 俱以儒聞, and achieved success through the quintessentially Chinese civil service examination system.[80]

A great-grandson of the early Tang era Feng family "southern barbarian" strongman of Canton was raised as a eunuch in the imperial palace in the early eighth century, and founded an (adoptive) dynasty of thoroughly Chinese eunuchs, who remained influential well into the ninth century.[81] It was not only possible, but even to be expected, that persons of foreign descent living among the Chinese elite at the capital might become more polished examples of Chinese high civilization than many "native Chinese" residing in the outlying provinces.

Considerable local cultural and linguistic diversity continued to exist across the breadth of the vast Tang empire. Wherever migrant individuals settled, however, within a couple of generations their children would naturally tend to become native speakers of the prevailing local dialect, and potentially at least melt into the surrounding population. A few descendants of immigrants from especially distant quarters (like the fourth-century monk Kang Sengyuan 康僧淵 [ca. 300-350]) may have been unable to shed a disconcertingly "foreign" physical appearance, in spite of otherwise becoming thoroughly Chinese, but there was in general no obstacle (not even the proverbially lengthy Chinese historical memory—although inconveniently accurate records apparently

[80] Han Xiang, 71; Ma Chi, "Shilun fan ren," 100-106; Ma Chi, *Tangdai fan jiang*, 204. *Xin Tang shu*, 135.4576.

[81] Du Wenyu, "Gao Lishi jiazu ji qi yuanliu," *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998); *Xin Tang shu*, 207.5858-60.

did prove temporarily embarrassing to some of the early Tuoba Xianbei Northern Wei emperors) to newcomers becoming "natives" within a surprisingly short length of time.[82]

Even in the most extreme cases of cultural assimilation of one population group by another, the process is rarely entirely unidirectional. Tang China was no exception: the rich cultural interactions of the period of division and early Sui-Tang era left indelible marks upon a new-style Chinese culture that long afterwards remained profoundly colored by exotic, especially Central Asian, fashions.[83]

In late Tang times, however, the volume of new Buddhist translations, and new vocabulary items entering the Chinese language from the western regions, diminished. Wukong 悟空, who ventured westward in 751 and returned in 790, is said to have been the last known Tang person to travel into the western regions. As Buddhists became less preoccupied with translation from foreign languages, several late Tang monks became known instead for their Chinese calligraphy, Chinese poetry, and other specifically Chinese arts.[84] This process may have been partially

[82] Tian Yuqing, "'Dai ge,' 'Dai ji,' he Bei-Wei guoshi: guoshi zhi yu de shixueshi kaocha," *Lishi yanjiu* 2001.1. For Kang Sengyuan, see *Gaoseng zhuan*, by Huijiao (ca. 530; Taibei: Huiwentang, 1987), 4.94.

[83] Fu Lecheng, "Tang xing wenhua," 257-59; Lin Enxian, "Tujue wenhua ji qi dui Tang-chao zhi yingxiang," *Tang-dai yanjiu lunji*, vol.1, ed. Zhongguo Tang-dai xuehui (1972; rpt. Taibei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1992), 581-91; Wang Sanbei and Zhao Hongbo, "Sui Yangdi minzu zhengce xinlun," *Xibei shida xuebao: Sheke ban* 1996.5: 72, 76; Xie Haiping, 428-29, 432. For assimilation, see Michael Banton, "The Direction and Speed of Ethnic Change," in *Ethnic Change*, ed. Charles F. Keyes (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1981).

[84] Fu Lecheng, "Tang xing wenhua," 255-56. Sun Changwu, *Zhongguo Fojiao wenhua xushuo* (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1990), 81. Huang Weizhong, "Zhong-wan Tang de caoshu seng," *Wan-Tang de shehui yu wenhua*, ed. Danjiang ["Tamkang"] Daxue Zhongwenxi (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990), 500.

reversed by renewed early Song-dynasty translation projects, but the great age of cultural importation from India was clearly over.

Cultural expectations throughout the Tang empire may have gradually tended to become somewhat more uniform, with a corresponding loss of tolerance for diversity. By the mid-eighth century, the explicitly designated "foreign" styles of early Tang court music and dance had been absorbed and blended into a new Tang repertoire, reorganized into two new categories that were no longer referred to by the names of foreign kingdoms. The growing importance of the civil service examination system, increased availability of Chinese language books and educational opportunities, and (alleged) penetration of this literature into even the popular culture, all tended to promote the spread of a somewhat more homogenous Chinese culture.[85] Strangers who did not conform to these expectations may have increasingly been marked as alien.

In 743, even before An Lushan's rebellion, private cross-border trade to the west was "entirely prohibited." In 779, Uighurs and other foreigners in the Tang capital were ordered to wear their native costumes and "not imitate Chinese." An ordinance of 836 tried to prohibit all unofficial private communication with foreigners. Soon thereafter, around 837, miscegenation was banned by local order in extreme southeast China. The taste for exotic cultural motifs, which had been so strong in the early Tang, seems to have become qualified now by hints of greater wariness, distaste, and suspicion—a process reflected in, and perhaps magnified by, what Stephen Owen sees as a general tendency from

[85] Yan Shoucheng, 39-41. Gong Pengcheng, "Lun Tang-dai de wenxue chongbai yu wenxue shehui," *Wan-Tang de shehui yu wenhua* 55-57, 66-67, 79; Sun Guodong, "Tang-Song zhi ji shehui mendi zhi xiaorong: Tang-Song zhi ji shehui zhuanbian yanjiu zhi yi," *Tang-Song shi luncong* (1980; rpt. Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2000), 242-58.

mid-Tang times to define both individual and corporate identity in opposition to, and through the exclusion of, "others."[86]

At the same time that Chinese high culture may have been becoming relatively more uniform, what was *not* Chinese may have also increasingly been clarified. On the Korean peninsula, organized indigenous Korean kingdoms probably first began to emerge only in the fourth century, and it was not until 668-76 that most of the peninsula was unified under native Korean rule. Across the sea in the Japanese islands—tales of descent from the Sun Goddess notwithstanding—it was also not until the seventh century that a reasonably homogenous "Japanese" state and civilization coalesced (and certain remote parts of the archipelago remained quite marginal long after that). On China's western flank, datable Tibetan history begins in the early seventh century, and it was only after the battle of Talas in 751 that Islam established a firm presence in Central Asia. Over the course of the Tang dynasty, therefore, China increasingly became surrounded—for the first time in its history—by organized, literate, and self-consciously not-Chinese states and civilizations. In the chaos following the Tang collapse in the tenth century there was even "a period of 'inverse cultural export' from Japan to China," involving the introduction or reintroduction of Japanese books, Buddhist sutras, and lost Chinese texts back into China.[87]

[86] *Tang huiyao*, 86.1579. *Zizhi tongjian*, 225.7265; *Tang huiyao*, 100.1798. *Cefu yuangui*, 999.11727-28. *Xin Tang shu*, 182.5367. Stephen Owen, "Singularity and Possession," *The End of the Chinese "Middle Ages": Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), 15-16.

[87] The emergence of Korean kingdoms is traced in Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000), 122-26. For the birth of Japan, see Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon shakai no rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), 1:74-77, 114, 158-59; Gavan McCormack, "Kokusaika: impediments in Japan's deep structure," in *Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern*, ed. by Donald Denoon et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge

The conceit that China was All-under-Heaven became more difficult to sustain. Even at the early seventh-century height of Tang power, the existence of ultimate imperial borders was candidly, if somewhat contradictorily, acknowledged. As early as 631, the emperor disclaimed any intention of "troubling the common people to obtain the empty name" of sovereignty over distant lands. By the eighth century, serious Tang aspirations to universal rule may have largely evaporated. Following a brief period of military resurgence, after 979 the new Song dynasty also proved unable to match the rhetoric of the early Tang with reality (although, as Wang Gungwu has noted, the language of the tribute-system could still be "comforting" to such a "lesser empire").[88]

Yet, despite the increased implausibility of really being All-under-Heaven, the Song was in many ways far from being a "lesser" dynasty. By the tenth-century, Song China may have held a third of the world's total population.[89] The Song dynasty enjoyed an unprecedentedly prosperous economy, and a richly sophisticated culture. Indeed, it may have been the very gravitational mass of this incomparably successful late-imperial society (whether under "ethnic Chinese" rule or not) that encouraged such a sense of self-satisfied complacency. Even the rise of foreign (but Confucian) states in neighboring Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, while undermining the credibility of Chinese claims to literal uni-

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University Press, 1996), 267-68. Other dates are well known. For "inverse cultural export," see Wang Zhenping, "Chōnen's Pilgrimage to China, 983-986," *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 7.2 (1994): 64, 94.

[88] *Zizhi tongjian*, 193.6091. Zhang Qun, 3-5. Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 47, 59, 62.

[89] Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999), 26.

versal political sovereignty, could only have further inspired confidence in the universality of Confucian values.