

Introduction

The conquest of the last of the Southern Dynasties by Sui in 589 brought to an end the Period of Disunion which had started with the collapse of Han in 220 C.E. The Sui dynasty was short-lived but laid the foundation for the Tang (618-907), an age of outstanding political and cultural achievement to which later generations looked back with nostalgia.

The Sui-Tang period of over three centuries stands as a high point in the development of Chinese civilization. It not only restored the unity of the Chinese empire, it enlarged this concept which had been born in early Zhou, idealized by the Confucian thinkers of the Warring States and given definite form in Qin and Han. At the end of Tang the pattern of unity was again challenged, but the ideal persisted and has remained very much alive to the present day.

The Sui and early Tang rulers greatly rationalized the government, introducing more sophisticated bureaucratic, legal, financial and military systems. Construction of the canal linking north and south under Emperor Yang of Sui and the long period of internal peace that lasted with few interruptions from the accession of Tang Taizong in 627 to the middle of the eighth century, as well as the opening up of contacts with Western Asia, greatly stimulated economic development and social change, preparing the way for the momentous transformations that came to fruition in the following Song period, when Chinese civilization was in many respects in advance of the rest of the world.

However, in political terms, the An Lushan rebellion from 755 to 763 marked a downward turning point. The unity of the country was challenged by struggles between the central authority and the semi-autonomous provincial governors, especially those near the northern borders. At the center new generations of civil service examination graduates competed with the aristocratic bureaucrats, and weak emperors fell under the influence of powerful eunuchs. And yet, technological progress, development of the south, and flourishing trade continued to foster urbanization and the growth of a money economy, bringing about a commercial revolution that reached its height in Song.

The triumphs and disasters of the three centuries of Sui and Tang are also clearly reflected in China's foreign relations. With their mixed

Chinese and nomadic ancestry, and as the direct heirs of the once alien rulers of North China as well as the unifiers of North and South, the Sui and early Tang rulers inherited the rich tradition of Chinese literate culture as well as a vigorous non-Chinese, nomadic spirit.

During the preceding three centuries of political disunity, alien rule in North China had challenged the universal rulership of traditional Chinese political theory. While undergoing a gradual process of sinicization, the non-Chinese northern regimes influenced Chinese society profoundly through their attempts to establish the political basis for a multiethnic empire and their patronage of the foreign religion of Buddhism, while preserving their military vigor and alien social customs. Political disunity within China proper encouraged the different regimes in both northern and southern China to look more outward. The southern regimes looked towards the sea, increasing their maritime contacts with Southeast Asian countries. The northern regimes looked to sophisticated trading partners on the steppe land in the north and the Western Regions in the west.

Despite coming out of so novel a background, the Sui and early Tang rulers were ambitious to restore a unified empire on the Han model when Chinese rule had stretched far and wide into the surrounding regions against far less sophisticated cultures than Sui and Tang faced. After initial successes, the Sui attempt at landward expansion ended in disaster, whereas in 630 Tang Taizong succeeded in conquering the Eastern Turks, who had previously dominated the Mongolian steppe, and assumed the title Heavenly Qaghan. This let him claim to be something more than just a Chinese Son of Heaven extending his rule from his own Chinese inner group to certain non-Chinese outer groups. He could now claim to be Heaven's ordained ruler of nomadic peoples on their own terms, like the Turkish qaghans. For a while Taizong, a ruler with a unique breadth of vision, attempted to bring about a real universal empire, one with both Chinese and non-Chinese subjects directly under a Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan combined in one person.

This vision was also given substance through incorporation of non-Chinese into the Chinese administrative apparatus and the use of non-Chinese nomadic troops as a major component in the Tang forces that sought to extend their conquests both east and west. By the late 650's Taizong's successor, Gaozong, had succeeded in extending Tang boundaries to an extent that was seldom matched before or afterwards in

Chinese history, and spread the name of the Heavenly Qaghan far and wide.

However, this success only compounded the perpetual problem of how to maintain such an empire and how to preserve its rulers' internal security. From the 670's on, the Tang regime had to steadily retreat from its claims to so overextended a territory and switch the emphasis in its foreign policy to building up strong defenses for its overextended frontiers. By the late 730's China's frontiers were defended by strong fortresses and large armies, including many non-Chinese among both the troops and the generals.

With the backing of the emperor, the non-Chinese generals in particular were encouraged to push beyond the frontiers into the surrounding areas, but this new form of power also proved to have been overextended and soon collapsed. These strong frontier armies were developed at the cost of the defenses of the capital. One of the frontier commanders, An Lushan, half Turk and half Sogdian, took advantage of the weakness at the center and rose in revolt in 755.

After a bitter struggle and only with the assistance of Inner Asian allies, especially the Uighurs, who dispatched troops to assist the Heavenly Qaghan, the Tang dynasty survived, but China's status as a great power was much diminished. The central government maintained a weak control over China internally, while externally it had to cope with a formidable challenge from Tibet, which had occupied that part of Chinese territory which allowed it to pose a permanent threat to the Tang capital, while the Uighur empire and later the Nanzhao kingdom demanded equality with China. As remarkable as was Taizong's attempt to build a universal empire, still more remarkable was the attitude of equality towards other states embodied in their policies and strategies by Tang rulers a century later, which ensured Tang's survival for another century and half.

Compared to Han, whose only major organized rival was the Xiongnu nomadic empire, Sui and Tang China faced a more complex international situation, one in which a number of states had been established in neighboring areas. The nomadic empires centered in the Mongolian steppe lands of first the Turks and then (from 740) the Uighurs continued to pose a serious threat. Farther east were the forest nomad Khitan and Xi confederations in Manchuria. These were states less formidable militarily than were those of the steppe nomads but they could maintain their independence by alternating alliances with the Chi-

nese and the steppe nomadic powers, and thus sometimes posed a threat to China's northeastern frontier.

On the Korean peninsula, the situation contrasted with that during Han times, when there was at the beginning only a loosely organized kingdom in the north and no strong political regimes farther south. Three kingdoms, Koguryō, Paekche and Silla, had developed during the post-Han Period of Disunion, with Koguryō, the closest to China, as a significant power on the international scene. In their competition for political supremacy these Korean states formed alliances with one another, or with the outside forces of China or Japan. Success of China's endeavor to conquer the peninsula before the 670's was to a large extent determined by the internal struggles on the peninsula.

On China's northwestern frontier was the Tuyuhun kingdom in modern Qinghai. Tibet, immediately to the west of China, rose to be a powerful rival in the early seventh century. Especially from the 750's onwards, it challenged the Chinese empire as no power from that quarter had ever done before or was ever to do again. In the Western Regions, the oasis states were a bone of contention between the Turks, China and Tibet. From the eighth century on, the Arab empire expanded to become one more contender for control of Central Asia, exerting its impact on the political situation in the region. Later in the same century the Nanzhao kingdom in the southwest evolved into a buffer state between Tang and Tibet, further complicating the frontier situation.

These states all had particular ways of life, partly determined by geography and natural resources. These ranged from nearly pure nomadism, to mixtures in various proportions of nomadism and agriculture, and nearly pure reliance on agriculture, which determined, to a large extent, their economic and political needs vis-à-vis China. Each presented a unique case which had to be taken into account in the formation of China's policies towards them.

Beyond those regimes in direct contact with China, other countries, ranging from Japan to Southeast Asia, India, and West Asia enlarged their commercial and cultural contacts with China as compared with earlier times. Interactions between China and these countries through diplomatic envoys, merchants, and travelers with religious or cultural purposes gave China under the Tang its most cosmopolitan flavor in all of premodern history. Significant state to state relationships with such countries were, however, few and will not often be referred to in this book. It is well known that foreign trade flourished under Tang

and the government worked out a set of policies and regulations regarding foreign trade and merchants. It is problematic to what extent either foreign or Chinese merchants engaged in foreign trade observed these rules, but that is more a matter for economic historians than historians of diplomacy. It deserves study in depth by the former, and will not be dealt with in this book.

Regardless of historical and geographical context, rulers of different types of political units, whether tribes, city-states, empires, or modern nations, have had fundamentally the same objectives in dealing with their neighbors—ranging from their own security to expansion against their neighbors—and have defended their interests by similar techniques, mainly the use of force and the construction of alliances.¹ Traditional China was no exception. There was, however, a whole set of particular theories and practices developed during China's long history of foreign contacts, which may be analyzed under two major headings: ideological purity, and practicality and flexibility. Any understanding of the foreign policy of imperial China must take these into account.

In exploring Sui-Tang foreign relations, we shall seek to illustrate the interplay of the twin aspects of ideological purity and practicality in reaching and implementing foreign policy decisions. We shall try to determine when and how these principles clashed with or were reconciled with each other, how they provided justifications for and theoretical support to decisions, and how both affected the decision-making process at moments of Chinese strength and weakness. Both aspects must be taken into account to fully explain Chinese foreign policy.

Ideological purity refers to the traditional, ideal pattern that, from the Chinese point of view, should govern relationships between China and other states. It was based on a cosmological view of the state that emerged from, and evolved in, the particular environment of China and posited a hierarchical and fundamentally sinocentric order to the Chinese known world. It emphasized the all-embracing rule of the Chinese emperor, the Son of Heaven, who was supposedly the only legitimate ruler of, not only China, but All-under-Heaven. This pattern was embodied in the ceremonial rituals used under the tribute system. Such an ideology imposed political pressures on the Chinese rulers not only to maintain security on the frontiers but also to exert their influence over the areas beyond the frontiers.

¹ Holsti 1983, p. 4.

By practicality and flexibility is meant a basic pragmatism which provided China's imperial rulers justification, for ignoring or bypassing considerations of ideological purity and conducting foreign relations on an equal footing with their neighbors. It allowed for acceptance of the need to retreat from the claims of Chinese superiority, and even permitted payment of tribute to "barbarians." Such measures could be carried out as long as they were seen to be entirely motivated by concern for China's own security and stability.

More specifically, we shall examine to what extent Sui-Tang foreign policies were unique as well as consistent with those of other periods in traditional China's history. We will ask what specific policies China adopted in each situation as it arose? What were the motives and objectives, the strengths and weaknesses, and what were both the intended and unintended effects of these policies?

In discussing the process of making of foreign policy, we will need to address the following questions: How were decisions arrived at? To what extent did the Chinese have the initiative? How did China's internal situation in successive periods influence foreign policy-making? What was the relationship between the frontier defense system and foreign policy? How and to what extent was foreign policy influenced by domestic political issues and economic pressures?

In terms of the external setting, what were the strategic interests of and issues motivating foreign countries that influenced their relations with China? How did the domestic situation in each foreign state influence its decision-makers and hence its relations with China and other countries? How did these foreign initiatives in turn influence China's actions towards these countries? Under what circumstances did China try to take the initiative in international politics; under what circumstances did it simply respond to other countries' actions and objectives?

Finally, we need to examine the roles and relative importance of the various participants in decision-making. These included the emperor, his chief ministers, certain influential eunuchs, civil and military officials at the central and local levels, non-Chinese officials, and Chinese imperial princesses who had been sent off to marry foreign rulers. How did the often clashing, sometimes synergizing ambitions, personalities, values and understanding and assessment of reality of this congeries of officials of various factions and their clients influence foreign policy decision-making?

Sources

The principal primary sources for Sui and Tang history are, first of all, the standard histories, namely the *Suishu* and the two Tang histories, the *Jiu Tangshu* and the *Xin Tangshu*.² Other basic works that have been used in this study are listed below in chronological order.

The *Da Tang Chuangye Qijuzhu* (*Diary of the Founding of the Great Tang Dynasty*), an unofficial court journal of Gaozu, compiled by Wen Daya covering the period from 617 to 626. As a chronological résumé of events concerning Li Yuan and his founding of the Tang dynasty from 615 up to the assumption of the throne by the new emperor, the book may be regarded as the first historical record of Tang.³

The *Zhenguan Zhengyao* (*Important Principles of Government from the Zhenguan Period*), a collection of Tang Taizong's discussions with his ministers, the memorials and suggestions from the ministers, and administrative measures of the period, collected and edited by Wu Jing. The book was completed around 720.⁴ It was later translated into the Khitan, Tangut, Jurchen, Mongolian and Manchu languages as a guide for the government, and was appreciated by all subsequent non-Han conquerors of China from Liao to Qing.⁵

The *Wenguan Cilin*, a collection of edicts and memorials completed in 658, edited by Xu Jingzong and others, is in a thousand chapters.⁶ It is lost, but some parts are collected in a Japanese edition.

The *Tang Liudian*, in thirty chapters, completed in 738 and presented to the throne by Chief Minister Li Linfu in 739.⁷ It is an important work on government institutions and contains materials on such

² The primary sources for Tang are analyzed in a thorough and comprehensive way in the introduction to Robert des Rotours 1932, with additional material in his 1947 work. See also Twitchett 1992, who describes in detail the development of official historiography during Tang. He also provides a valuable analysis of the sources for the Basic Annals and the Monographs of the *Jiu Tangshu*. He does not discuss the sources of information for the chapters on foreign countries, for which see Chapter 2 below.

³ For a detailed study of the book, see Bingham 1937, pp. 568-74; Twitchett 1992, pp. 38-42, with references to earlier literature.

⁴ ZGZY 1978, pp. 1-2.

⁵ Franke and Twitchett 1994, p. 33.

⁶ Twitchett 1992, p. 98.

⁷ Twitchett 1992, pp. 101-3.

agencies as the Court of State Ceremonials (*honglu si*) and on administration and taxation in the subordinated area commands and prefectures (*jimi fuzhou*) under the Ministry of Revenue.

The *Tongdian*, compiled by Du You from 766 to 801. An institutional history, it continued and enlarged the *Zhengdian* of Liu Zhi.⁸ The Tang sections in the chapters on foreign countries were presumably taken from materials compiled in the Bureau of Historiography. It has the fullest account of the negotiation between Tang official Guo Yuanzhen and Tibetan general Mgar Khri 'bring during Empress Wu's time.⁹ Du You also incorporated many materials from other sources, including a book written by his nephew, Du Huan, who was taken captive in the famous battle at the Talas River between Tang and the Arabs in 751 and did not return to Tang until ten years later.¹⁰

The *Tang Huiyao*, compiled by Wang Pu and presented to the throne in 961 at the beginning of Song. An administrative encyclopedia, it combines the *Huiyao* of Su Mian, presented to the throne in 804, and the *Xu Huiyao* of Yang Shaofu, presented in 853, with the addition of a very small amount of material for the period after 852.¹¹ It has the most complete record of the discussions held early in Taizong's reign concerning the resettlement of those Turks who had submitted to Tang rule.¹²

The *Cefu Yuangui*, compiled by Wang Qinruo, Yang Yi and others during Song under an imperial commission from 1005 to 1013. It is an historical encyclopedia. The material concerning the Tang period was from the veritable records and Tang histories.¹³ Therefore, it contains more original sources than the *Jiu Tangshu* and the *Xin Tangshu* and more complete versions of documents abridged in other sources. With its organization of a variety of material under different topics, such as the section on foreign vassals (*waichen bu*), the *Cefu Yuangui* is particularly useful for study of foreign relations. It records tributary missions from foreign countries which other histories have chosen not to mention. One example deals with the Turks. According to the *Cefu Yuangui*, during Tang Gaozu's reign, the Turks sent tributary missions

⁸ Li Zongye 1982, pp. 307-9; Twitchett 1992, pp. 104-7.

⁹ *TD* 190, pp. 1023-4.

¹⁰ *TD* 191, p. 1029; 192, p. 1034.

¹¹ Twitchett 1956, p. 51; 1992, pp. 109-16.

¹² *THY* 73, pp. 1312-4.

¹³ Liu Naihe 1983, pp. 1-28; Twitchett 1992, pp. 117-8.

to the Tang court almost every year. In the basic annals of Gaozu and the accounts of the Turks in the *Jiu Tangshu* and *Xin Tangshu*, on the other hand, it is reported that the Turks made incursions across the Tang frontier almost every year, but records about the Turkish tributary missions are not complete. Some of the Turkish missions might have just come to the Chinese court to deliver messages, but the fact that they were still recorded as tributary missions implies that the foreigners had to conform to the rituals of the tribute system laid down by the Chinese in order to be received at the Chinese court at all.

The *Tang Da Zhaoling Ji* was compiled by Song Minqiu, whose preface is dated 1070.¹⁴ Some passages from the edicts included in the collection are referred to in the two Tang official histories and in the *Zizhi Tongjian*. The work is useful for studying the format and rhetoric of Tang documents.

The *Zizhi Tongjian*, compiled by a group of Song historians with Sima Guang as the chief editor from 1065 to 1084. When compiling the Tang section (chapters 185 to 265), Sima Guang consulted all the materials available at the time, including the histories mentioned above and also a great many other works. It is well recognized that the *Zizhi Tongjian* is superior to all other histories of the Tang period in terms of the amount of material consulted, analysis of original sources and clarity of expression.

The *Zizhi Tongjian Kaoyi* is a series of notes made by Sima Guang while editing his history which frequently quotes from books that are now lost and provides clues as to the sources for information in his history. The *Kaoyi* consults many works which touch on Tang foreign relations, most of which are no longer extant. For instance, it uses the *Fenyangwang Jiazhuan* (*Family Biography of the Prince of Fenyang*) (= *Guogong Jiazhuan*, or *Family Biography of Lord Guo*), in eight chapters, a family biography of Guo Ziyi (696-781) by Chen Hong, a long-time staff officer under Guo. Guo Ziyi was a very important high-ranking military official involved in many battles in alliance with the Uighurs during the campaign to suppress the An Lushan rebellion and also participated in wars against the Tibetans. The *Kaoyi* often refers to this work for its eye-witness accounts. This work contained the only information for one episode involving the Uighurs, and was used by the *Tongjian*.¹⁵ Unfortunately the work no longer exists.

¹⁴ Twitchett 1992, p. 100.

¹⁵ *ZZTJ* 225, p. 7236.

Also used by the *Kaoyi* is *Yehou Jiazhuan* (*Family Biography of the Marquis of Ye*), in ten chapters. It is a family biography of the Chief Minister Li Mi (722-789), by his son Li Fan. Although the work contains much unreliable information, since Li Fan intentionally glorified his father,¹⁶ in some matters dealing with the Uighurs and Tibet, the *Kaoyi* refers to the work as an additional contemporary record. It is also an important source for the study of the militia (*fubing*) system.¹⁷ The work does not exist integrally, but its fragments are included in the *Shuofu* and other collective works.

The *Beihuang Junzhang Lu* (*Record of Chieftains of the Northern Wilderness*), in three chapters, also written by Li Fan, is referred to by the *Kaoyi* in one or two places. The work is lost, but from the title, one can see that it was an historical record concerning the non-Chinese chieftains to the north of Tang.

Also referred to by the *Kaoyi* is the *Duan Xiushi Biezhuan* (= *Duangong Jiazhuan*, or *Separate Biography of Lord Duan*), in two chapters, a family biography of Duan Xiushi (718-783), compiled in the Bureau of Historiography by Ma Yu, who was the Vice Director of the Imperial Library during the Yuanhe period (806-819). Duan Xiushi was also a high-ranking military official who was involved in frontier affairs, particularly those involving the Tibetans. It is another case where the family biography provided additional information. The work no longer exists.

The *Tang Tongji*, compiled by Chen Yue, was a chronological account of Chinese history from the beginning of Tang until 823, in one hundred chapters. But by Song there were only forty chapters left, the work ending at the time of Empress Wu.¹⁸ The *Kaoyi* refers to this work often. For one incident involving Tibet, it was the only source and the *Tongjian* incorporates all the information it provides.¹⁹ Since the work is no longer extant and not much information can be found about the writer, we are unable to tell more about it.

The *Bu Guoshi*, in six or ten chapters, was compiled by Lin En, who was a presented scholar (*jinshi*) of the time of Xizong (874-888). The work no longer exists, but at the time when the *Zizhi Tongjian* was

¹⁶ ZZZJ 231, p. 7456; *Junzhai Dushuzhi* 9; Mackerras 1972, p. 3; p. 156, note 159.

¹⁷ Pulleyblank 1955, p. 142, note 9; Lai 1986, pp. 4-5. For more on this work, see Dien 1974.

¹⁸ *Zhizhai Shulu Jieti* 4.

¹⁹ ZZZJ 205, p. 6493.

compiled, it was an important source for the later part of the Tang dynasty for which few other materials were available. It had detailed accounts of events concerning Tibet at the end of the first Tibetan kingdom. For one event involving Tibet, it provided the sole source and the *Tongjian* followed it.²⁰

Collected works of such Tang officials as Zhang Jiuling, Lu Zhi, Bai Juyi, and Li Deyu comprise another category of sources. These works typically contain the full texts of official letters to foreign rulers on behalf of the emperors, and memorials on foreign policy written by their subjects.²¹

The writings of such officials are also included in the *Quan Tangwen* (*Complete Tang Essays*), compiled during the Qing dynasty. It is a useful supplementary source for imperial edicts, official letters, and essays of the Tang dynasty usually provided in more complete form than the extracts quoted in the Tang histories.

In the *Quan Tangshi* (*Complete Tang Poetry*), compiled during the Qing dynasty, are many poems lamenting the hardships of frontier soldiers, foreign invasions and some poems commenting on Tang's marriage alliance policy.

There is a considerable amount of material on Tang history among the documents discovered in Dunhuang and Turfan. I have found, however, that they do not have much relevance for high level foreign affairs, so they are not referred to in the book.

The biases in the Chinese accounts of foreign countries are obvious.²² It was assumed that Chinese culture was superior, and therefore all non-Chinese are referred to as "barbarians" who have to be transformed by Chinese civilization. Nomadic peoples are constantly described as having human faces but animal hearts, as being greedy and unrestrained in their behavior, incapable of understanding reason—as "monkeys wearing hats," or "dwarf-slaves."

Based on the idea that the Chinese Son of Heaven was to rule All-under-Heaven, all foreign states were treated as tributary to China. Their contacts with China were routinely recorded as journeys to pay homage and tribute to the Chinese Son of Heaven, using the rhetoric

²⁰ *ZZTJ* 246, p. 7938.

²¹ For Zhang Jiuling and his works, see Herbert 1978; for Lu Zhi, see Chiu-Duke 1992; for Bai Juyi and his letters to Tibetan leaders, see Kolmas 1966; for Li Deyu, see Drompp 1986.

²² See examples in Mackerras 1972, p. 5; Eberhard 1982, pp. 100-4.

and vocabulary of the tribute system, and their envoys were made to conform to the rituals required by the tribute system.

Feelings of cultural superiority and their sinocentric viewpoint often hindered Chinese from understanding their neighbors and helped to perpetuate misconceptions about and feelings of hostility toward them. Inevitably the Chinese looked at the outside world from a Chinese point of view. Historians usually recorded only those peoples that had direct contact with China and events that affected China's foreign relations in various ways without giving due attention to record what was important to these peoples themselves. They also showed bias in the way they justified Chinese aggressions as defensive actions or as proper extensions of the influence of the Chinese Son of Heaven.²³

One can never expect historians, who must necessarily select and omit, to give a complete and objective account of everything that happened. It must, however, also be pointed out that in their attitudes towards their neighbors, especially the nomads, the traditional Chinese were not unique; nor were they worse than other peoples.²⁴ Furthermore, the traditions established by the ancient models that they followed guaranteed a considerable degree of objectivity and reliability to Chinese historical writing. Histories were not freely created compositions by individual authors, but were compiled primarily by copying and excerpting earlier works, mainly official documents, with any comments by the historian added separately from the main texts.²⁵ While this "scissors and paste" method had its own dangers and limitations, it did have the effect of minimizing distortions created by hindsight after the event. Being originally composed for practical purposes, these documents could not afford to be too much distorted by ideological considerations. More will be said in Chapter 2 about the ways in which the information about foreign countries that eventually found its way into the official histories was gathered.

Nor did Confucian historians always, or typically, uncritically accept Chinese aggression against foreign peoples. They often openly condemned aggressive wars, which caused suffering to the people. Han dynasty records speak highly of the civilized people of Da Qin

²³ Eberhard 1982, p. 116.

²⁴ See examples of comments on nomads in western sources in Sinor 1990a, pp. 4-5; pp. 17-8.

²⁵ Gardner 1938; Yang Lien-sheng 1961; Twitchett 1961; 1992; Wang Gungwu 1973.

(presumably the eastern Roman empire) and these records constitute a fuller account than any Roman or Greek account of China.²⁶

Nor do Confucian accounts hide the fact that at various times China had to recognize neighboring peoples as equals.²⁷ The Chinese accounts are full of episodes of tension between ideological purity and pragmatism in foreign relations. It is wrong to say the Chinese “did not try to understand the culture, attitudes, and beliefs of their neighbors.”²⁸ As Chapter 2 notes, the Chinese were interested in collecting information on foreign countries, both for the practical and important purpose of decision-making, and out of curiosity and desire for knowledge. Subjects dealt with in accounts of foreign countries range from climate, geographical conditions and products, to social customs, defining the family, marriage and women’s status, narratives of religious practices, political organization, legends and traditions, and the history of a people’s contacts with China. The Chinese official histories and numerous other historical records, in spite of their biases and shortcomings, are invaluable not only for the history of China’s foreign relations but also for the histories of China’s neighboring peoples.

Though much less complete and comprehensive than the material in Chinese sources, there exist important historical documents from some of China’s neighbors that corroborate, contradict or supplement the Chinese historical record of relations with foreign states during Sui and Tang. Sources of this type listed below provide a non-Chinese perspective which cannot be neglected.

1. Old Turkish inscriptions of the eighth century. In his *Tujue Jishi*, Cen Zhongmian provides annotated Chinese translations of the three most important of these, the Tonyukuk, Kül Tigin and Bilgä inscriptions. I have also used Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, which has an English translation without annotation of these three inscriptions and two other inscriptions, those of Ongin and Küli Chor. These inscriptions show the Turkish perspectives on their history and relations with China while also reflecting the influence of the Chinese cosmic order on the Turks.²⁹ Mori Masao has a study on the language and phrases of the Turkish inscriptions and their implications. Lin

²⁶ Fitzgerald 1964, p. 8; Yang Lien-sheng 1968, p. 20.

²⁷ Yang Lien-sheng 1968, p. 20.

²⁸ Eberhard 1982, p. 101.

²⁹ See for example, Bazin 1963.

Enxian has a survey of the discovery and background of five Old Turkish inscriptions including those from the Tujue Turks and the Uighurs.³⁰

2. Of Korean traditional histories in Chinese, the one most relevant to my study is the *Samguk Sagi* (*The Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms*), which was compiled in the twelfth century by Kim Pu-sik, and covers the period from the beginning of the three kingdoms to the fall of unified Silla in 938. While Kim drew a large amount of material from Chinese sources he also used quite a few native records, especially in the biographies section.³¹ The *Samguk Yusa* compiled by Iryŏn towards the end of the thirteenth century is also an important history but it does not have an immediate bearing on my study and it includes more myth and other less believable tales than does the *Samguk Sagi*.

3. Inscriptions of the Uighurs. The Shine-usu inscription in Old Turkish script gives an account of Moyanchuo Qaghan (reign 747-759). It has been translated into Chinese, with annotations by Wang Jingru.³² The other important inscription was found in Karabalghasun. It has three parts, one in Chinese, one in Sogdian and one in Old Turkish, and was written in the ninth century. The Chinese part is best preserved. In my book I use the annotated text in Haneda Tōru's comprehensive study of the Uighurs during Tang.³³

4. The major sources in Tibetan for the Tufan period (early seventh to mid-ninth century) are in three forms: inscriptions, manuscripts, and wooden tablets.³⁴ Such Tibetan documents were collected in three volumes by F. W. Thomas.³⁵ Those that are the most important to my study of Tang-Tibetan relations, especially the study of the treaties concluded by the two sides, are the 821/822 inscription in Tibetan and Chinese scripts, and the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* found at Dunhuang. For the inscription, I use mainly the translations and annotations by H. E. Richardson in *Ancient Historical edicts at Lhasa and the Mu Tsung/Khri Gtsug Lde Brtsan Treaty of A. D. 821-822, from the Inscription at Lhasa*, the translation by Li Fangkuei in "The inscription of the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821-822," and the

³⁰ Mori Masao 1978, pp. 208-53; Lin Enxian 1988, pp. 314-30.

³¹ Jamieson 1969, pp. 5-17; Gardiner 1970.

³² Wang Jingru 1938.

³³ Haneda 1957.

³⁴ For a summary of these sources see Wang Yao 1982, pp. 2-7; Lin Guanqun 1985.

³⁵ Thomas 1935, 1951 and 1955.

version in Wang Yao's *Tufan Jinshi Lu*. The works of Richardson and Wang Yao also discuss another important document, the "Ngan Lam Stag Sgra Klu Khong inscription." Wang Yao's book is a study of all thirteen Tibetan inscriptions of the Tufan period still extant. He also has Chinese translations of the two Tibetan historical works,³⁶ and a study of the wooden tablets of the Tufan period discovered in Xinjiang.³⁷

These sources provide a non-Chinese perspective which one cannot afford to neglect. A good example is found in the Turkish inscriptions. In mid-seventh century the Turks were incorporated into the Chinese area command-prefecture system. In contrast to the Chinese attitude which treated this as a triumph for Taizong as the Heavenly Qaghan, this period was considered retrospectively by the Turks as a time of national subjugation and humiliation. The Turkish inscriptions record:

Their sons worthy of becoming lords became slaves, and their daughters worthy of becoming ladies became servants to the Chinese people. The Turkish lords abandoned their Turkish titles. Those lords who were in China held the Chinese titles and obeyed the Chinese emperor and gave their services to him for fifty years.³⁸

Another example is found in the Korean history the *Samguk Sagi*, in which Kim Pu-sik commented that according to Liu Gongquan (772?-860?), Taizong twice showed his tremendous fear of Koguryō's force during battles occurring in 645. However neither the *Jiu Tangshu*, nor the *Xin Tangshu* or the *Zizhi Tongjian* mention this, perhaps in accordance with the traditional practice of proper concealment.³⁹ The Korean histories record many more details of the internal relations among the three Korean states. Similarly, while the Chinese paid special attention to the treaties with Tibet, the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* make no mention of these treaties, and yet contain detailed records of treaties concluded among themselves. Such discrepancies are not difficult to understand: these non-Chinese peoples had their own internal set of problems; their alliances and rivals were often more

³⁶ Wang Yao 1979.

³⁷ Wang Yao 1982; Wang Yao and Chen Jian 1986.

³⁸ "The Kül Tigin Inscription." See Tekin 1968, translation, p. 264.

³⁹ *SGSG* 22, King Pojang 8. I cannot find any information about Liu Gongquan's book. The monographs of bibliographies in the *JTS* and *XTS* do not list Liu's book.

immediate and important concerns than their relations with the distant Chinese court.

A comparative study of the non-Chinese sources shows that foreign records generally corroborate but sometimes supplement the Chinese sources. For example, the *Samguk Sagi* says that upon the conquest of Paekche in 660 the Chinese planned to invade Silla, which had been an ally of China.⁴⁰ This Korean work also contains a letter written by the king of Silla to the Chinese in 671, which states that in 648 Taizong had promised that when Tang had subdued Koguryŏ and Paekche, the territory south of P'yŏngyang and the land of Paekche would be given to Silla.⁴¹ The Chinese sources nowhere refer to these matters. Whether the Korean sources are reliable is unclear.

The numerous traditional sources are bound to contain discrepancies and contradictions. Both traditional and modern scholars have paid particular attention to this question. Sima Guang's *Kaoyi* was an important innovation in this respect, and this tradition matured during the Qing period, when three Qing scholars Wang Mingsheng, Qian Daxin and Zhao Yi made detailed textual studies and analyses of the Tang histories.⁴²

In modern times, the Tang historical works have been given close attention by scholars in both east and west. For Sui-Tang foreign relations, Edouard Chavannes' *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue [Turcs] Occidentaux* and Cen Zhongmian's *Xi Tujue Shiliao Buque ji Kaozheng* and *Tujue Jishi* are comprehensive in their collections of materials and have detailed annotations. On Korea, the *Chōsen shi*, by Japanese scholars, is a collection of highlights from all available materials in Chinese, Korean and Japanese traditional sources arranged in chronological order. The editor notes discrepancies when they occur but does not go into a detailed discussion of them.

There has not been a comprehensive collection of traditional sources on the Uighurs but important works with emphasis on annotation are: Haneda Tōru, "Tōdai kaikotsushi no kenkyū"; Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire*, and Feng Jiasheng and others, *Weiwuerzu Shiliao Jianbian*. On the Western Regions, Ise Sentarō's *Chūgoku Seiiki*

⁴⁰ SGSG 42, "Biography of Kim Yusin, Part II."

⁴¹ SGSG 7, pp. 1-7; Jamieson 1969, pp. 15-6; pp. 63-6.

⁴² *Shiqishi Shangque* by Wang Mingsheng; *Nianershi Kaoyi* by Qian Daxin; *Nianershi Zhaji* by Zhao Yi.

Keieishi Kenkyū is comprehensive and critical in its treatment of primary sources.

Materials about the relations between Tang and Tibet are more abundant in both the Chinese and Tibetan languages than are materials about the above-mentioned peoples. Several collections of Chinese sources in official histories, *Zizhi Tongjian* and *Cefu Yuangui* are available.⁴³ In his *Kodai Chibetto shi Kenkyū*, Sato Hisashi provides a detailed study of primary sources in both Chinese and Tibetan concerning the Tang period. The *Xin Tangshu Tufanzhuan Jianzheng* by Wang Zhong is an annotated work with references to Tibetan and other Chinese sources. Yamaguchi Zuiho in his *Toban Ōkoku Seiritsu shi no Kenkyū* has carried further the study of the sources about the history of early Tibet, and Beckwith in his *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* refers to sources in Tibetan, Arabic, Old Turkish, and Chinese. While these works are referred to in my book, I also use other modern works and note the important discrepancies in sources wherever necessary.

⁴³ Chen Xiezhang and others 1982; Su Jinren 1982; Su Jinren and Xiao Lianzi 1981.