THE LI HSUN FACTION AND THE SWEET DEW INCIDENT IN 835:
A STUDY OF A CLIMACTIC EPISODE IN LATE T'ANG POLITICS

by

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Abstract

After the crippling An-Shih chaos of 755-762, the attempts of post-rebellion T'ang to revitalize the dynasty were continuously hindered by four inter-related factors: foreign incursions, fan-chen provincialism, bureaucratic factionalism, and eunuch domination of the court. The Sweet Dew Incident of 835 was a palace coup in Ch'ang-an launched against the power-entrenched court eunuchs by the Li Hsün faction in the central bureaucracy. Li Hsün's supporters included the emperor Wen-tsung, who played an active role in the initial planning and final launching of the coup. The coup failed, and the Li Hsün men suffered a tragic end, with the city of Ch'ang-an being thrown into chaos and terror. The historiography of the incident in the standard histories of the period is marked throughout with the moralizing bias of the Sung historiographers and does not provide an adequate interpretation of the Li Hsün faction. Through a critical study of the standard histories of the period and using supplementary sources, this thesis is an attempt to review the events of the Sweet Dew Incident and the Li Hsün faction in the context of the historical realities of post-rebellion T'ang and their developments during the reign of Wen-tsung.

Chapter One is an introduction to the problem under study. The events and participants of the Sweet Dew Incident as recorded by the standard histories are briefly described. In this chapter the sources of these standard histories are examined for the period under study, and the discrepancies and consistencies within these standard histories are explained.

The next chapter deals with the four historical realities of post-rebellion T'ang and their respective developments during the
reign of Wen-tsung. The incursions of the Uighur, T'u-fan, and Nan-chao tribes are first examined, then the recalcitrancy of the northeast provinces. Next, the several domains of eunuch interference in the court of Ch'ang-an, including imperial succession and military control, are discussed. Lastly, this chapter describes the controversial issues surrounding the Niu and Li factional strife, the infamous factional feud which penetrated the central bureaucracy for over forty years. In this chapter an attempt is also made to see whether the proposed strategy of the Li Hsün faction was appropriate for dealing with these four problems of the central government.

Chapter Three is essentially a reconstruction of the Li Hsün faction. The seventeen members of the faction are traced and studied in a composite biography based on their family backgrounds and political careers. This chapter also probes the circumstances under which the key personalities of the faction, Li Hsün, Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su, made each other's acquaintance and formed a secret alignment in Lo-yang.

Chapter Four deals with the rise to power of Li Hsün. Li Hsün's political methods, particularly the divide and rule tactic applied to the resolution of the eunuch problem and factionalism, are examined. In this chapter Li Hsün's manipulations from within the Han-lin Academy and the transformation of his secret alignment in Lo-yang to a dominant faction in Ch'ang-an are also observed.

The final chapter provides a narration of the events of the Sweet Dew Incident of 835. It concludes the study with an examination of the aftermath and repercussions of the coup on the emperor Wen-tsung and on the T'ang central government.
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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION AND THE SOURCES OF THE STANDARD WORKS

Introduction

The vast T'ang empire that emerged from the An-Shih rebellions (755-762) was shaken in institutional foundations and diminished in geographical extent. Externally, it was incessantly plagued by semi-autonomous military provinces and encroaching foreign tribes. The Yüan-ho Restoration under the emperor Hsien-tsung (805-820) stabilized to some extent central-provincial relations, but the pressures from border tribes did not cease until their final collapse as a result of internal disintegration. Internally, the usurpation of imperial prerogatives by the eunuchs and the factional strife amongst the central bureaucrats together rendered decision-making difficult and ineffective, thereby adversely affecting the credibility of the central authority in Ch'ang-an. During the five month administration of Wang Shu-wen and his faction in the reign of Shun-tsung (805), certain political reforms aimed against the eunuchs' abuses of power were implemented. However, hostile reaction in the eunuch circles and the upper class bureaucrats succeeded in expelling the Wang Shu-wen faction from court, and even forced the abdication of Shun-tsung in favour of his son Hsien-tsung. In the reign of Wen-tsung (827-840), anxious attempts by the emperor to settle various immediate problems helped bring the Li Hsün faction to power, and precipitated the Sweet Dew Incident of December 14, 835.

From 833 to 835 a group of individuals under Li Hsün, a Confucian scholar of eminent lineage but in political disgrace at the time, formed a political alignment. Through both orthodox and unorthodox methods, the alignment emerged as the dominant faction in the court
of Ch'ang-an. Varied in social and political backgrounds, the key personalities included the chief ministers, Wang Yai, Chia Su and Shu Yüan-yü. The faction also had an untrustworthy official, Wang Fan, who could not keep secrets, and a notorious physician, Cheng Chu. Apparently they had previously and secretly enlisted the support of the emperor Wen-tsung in their political maneuvers and ventures. In less than a year, this faction was able to gain control of the administration, demote and exile the leading factionalist politicians at court, and murder at least six leading eunuchs, including Wang Shou-ch'eng, the eunuch who had originally been responsible for the rise to power of the Li Hsun faction. When Li Hsun and his faction launched the final plot to eliminate the remaining court eunuchs, they came to a tragic end.

On that fateful day (the jen-hsü day of the eleventh month of T'ai-ho 9, 835) the presence of 'sweet dew', an auspicious omen believed to forecast peace and harmony in the empire, was reported at the morning audience by Han Yüeh, a member of the Li Hsun faction and grand general of the Chin-wu Guards of the Left. The emperor Wen-tsung, himself a participant in this anti-eunuch coup, summoned together all the court eunuchs, including the generals of the eunuch controlled Shen-ts'e Armies, Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih, to confirm the truth of Han Yüeh's announcement. At the site where the 'sweet dew' was supposed to have descended, the eunuchs discovered, instead, an ambush of armed soldiers. In contrast to the incompetent performance of Li Hsun's men (Han Yüeh was perspiring heavily before any action took place, and Wang Fan was trembling so hard that he could not command his army), the response of the eunuchs was amazingly quick and well co-
ordinated. After successfully abducting the emperor, who symbolized ultimate and absolute authority in the T'ang dynasty, the eunuchs immediately launched a counter-attack. Shortly afterwards, the entire Li Hsün faction was arrested, and without any trial administered a bizarre execution. They were chopped in half and their heads were hung above the city gates. Clan exterminations of the Li Hsün faction members were ruthlessly carried out. Women and slaves found in their residences were enslaved by the state. While a dozen to fifty eunuchs died in the event, altogether three thousand men were slaughtered by the eunuchs' orders. These massacres occurred in the palaces, the Ch'ang-an city quarters, and also in Fêng-hsiang (a short distance north-west of Ch'ang-an). Cheng Chu and several faction members had previously been despatched to Feng-hsiang in anticipation of a second attack in the event that the coup failed in Ch'ang-an. Some of these three thousand men, mostly civil officials, died through "guilt by association", but the majority was just arbitrarily killed when the eunuchs sought revenge from the entire officialdom, of which the Li Hsün faction was only a part. For the rest of the month, soldiers and gangsters took advantage of the general chaos to plunder in the city. Order was restored only through the conscientious efforts of Ling-hu Ch'u, Cheng T'an, and Li Shih. The powers of deliberation, however, had openly and sharply shifted to the court eunuchs, who had triumphantly engineered the counter-attack. The central bureaucracy, already riven by factional strife, further diminished in effective administration and control. As punishment for his involvement in the coup, the emperor Wen-tsung, precariously holding his throne, was subjected to strict surveillance. Because this anti-eunuch coup was launched with the use of "sweet dew" as the decoy, it
has been referred to as the Sweet Dew Incident (Kan-lu chih-pien) or the Sweet Dew Tragedy (Kan-lu chih-huo) by the traditional historiographers.

The traditional interpretation of this climactic episode in late T'ang politics has been based on the standard histories for the period: the Chiu T'ang-shu, Hsên T'ang-shu and the Tzu-chih t'ung-chien (hereafter referred to as CTS, HTS and TCTC, or collectively as the standard works). The CTS was compiled in 940-945 (Five Dynasties), the HTS in 1043-1060 (Sung), and the TCTC in 1066-1085 (Sung). However, for the sake of convenience we shall be referring to their compilers as Sung historiographers. These standard works cast the Li Hsün faction as a group of evil, self-enhancing upstarts, divided amongst themselves by internal jealousies, and united only by a common greed for power, wealth and revenge. They are further condemned for openly associating with the generally despised eunuch, Wang Shou-ch'eng, who had first brought the group to political predominance. The unorthodox rise to power and daring political methods of Li Hsun are particularly denounced. The Sung historiographers found the incident in which the Li Hsün faction poisoned Wang Shou-ch'eng to be morally shocking. This incident provided the ultimate proof for the Sung historiographers that the faction stopped at nothing to achieve their ambitions, including devising unscrupulous anti-eunuch and anti-factionalist policies solely for the purpose of currying imperial favour. The Sung historiographers interpret the Sweet Dew Incident of 835 as the inevitable outcome of internal strife in the Li Hsün faction. According to them, the coup was launched a few days ahead of schedule because Li Hsün wished to claim full credit for eliminating all the court eunuchs. Towards this objective, he and his personal adherents had also plotted for the murder of Cheng Chu,
the physician who had first introduced the group to Wang Shou-ch'eng for
political advancement. This negative appraisal of the Li Hsun faction
not only explained for the Sung historiographers the incompetent
performance of the Li Hsun faction in the sweet dew coup, at the same
time it confirmed the loosely bound nature of their alignment. Thus,
in these respects, the standard works conclude that the faction members
deserved the bizarre executions and clan exterminations. We observe also
that the attempts and relative success of the brief Li Hsun administration
in political reforms, such as the ousting of factionalist leaders and
the murder of six leading eunuchs, are not recognized by the Sung
historiographers. Instead, the group received the entire blame for
creating the havoc and massacres in Ch'ang-an, the shift of the powers
of deliberation to the eunuchs, and the worsened vulnerability of central
authority in the face of recalcitrant military governors. Despite the
faulty nature of this traditional interpretation, a number of modern
scholars still subscribe to it.7

Alternate views, however, have not been absent. The Ch'ing scholar,
Wang Ming-sheng, challenges the traditional portrayal of Li Hsun and
Cheng Chu as immoral scoundrels.8 He points out the relative success
of the Li Hsun administration and describes the political talents of
Li Hsun. However, Wang Ming-sheng's contribution to the study of the
Li Hsun faction lies in probing the doubtful aspects of the traditional
interpretation; it was not his intention to interpret the entire event.9
Several modern Chinese historians have similarly offered alternative
views about the incident. Ts'en Chung-mien follows the tradition of
Wang Ming-sheng in noting the doubtful and suspicious items related in
the standard works.10 Ch'en Yin-k'o and Li Ssu-mien proceed further in
venturing explanations for the Li Hsun faction and the Sweet Dew Incident in the context of eunuch politics in late T'ang. According to Ch'en Yin-k'o, the members of the Li Hsun faction, like those of the Wang Shu-wen faction and all other alignments in the central bureaucracy in late T'ang, were no more than "hangers-on" and "echoing voices" of contending eunuch cliques. According to Lü Ssu-mien, the struggle for supremacy between the eunuch controlled Shen-ts'e Armies of the Left and of the Right played a direct role in the initial formation of the Li Hsun faction and in their final debacle. Neither Ch'en Yin-k'o nor Lü Ssu-mien conceived the Li Hsun alignment as an independent faction functioning with the sanction of the emperor Wen-tsung. In Western languages, Arthur Waley's account of the incident in the *Life and Times of Po Chü-i* constitutes perhaps the only, and by far the most favourable re-appraisal of the Li Hsun faction. Waley sees in the Sweet Dew Incident a sincere and bold attempt by the faction members (some of whom were Po Chü-i's friends) to oust the eunuchs for the benefit of the T'ang political system, rather than for personal aggrandizement alone. He considers the extremities of policy associated with the faction to be necessary in the plot to eliminate the power-entrenched court eunuchs.

Both the traditional and alternative interpretations above have viewed the Sweet Dew Incident only in the context of the eunuch problem. To date, no separate study of the Li Hsun faction has appeared in any language. There has been no attempt to connect this incident with other thematic problems of the time, such as factionalism in the central bureaucracy and the central-provincial relationships outside of Ch'ang-an. I feel that a detailed study of the Li Hsun faction and the
Sweet Dew Incident, which together constituted a climactic episode in late T'ang politics, will enable us to gain certain insights into the intricacies underlying politics in late ninth century China. In this thesis, my major concern is to reconstruct the formation, composition and administration of the Li Hsün alignment, and to trace the stages and impact of its presence in the court of Wen-tsung. Through the experiences of Li Hsün and his faction, we may be able to observe the operation and manipulation of certain informal institutional structures such as the Han-lin Academy of the scholars, and the Shen-ts'e Armies and the Shu-mi Council of the court eunuchs. Furthermore, through Wen-tsung's own experience with Li Hsün and the political realities of his reign, we may see and feel some repercussions of the An-Shih rebellions which had caused the T'ang dynasty to totter slowly to its end. With this inquiry in mind, the rest of this chapter will explore the sources upon which the standard works drew for the period under study. Chapter Two will discuss the political realities of Wen-tsung's reign, and the extent to which the Li Hsün faction's objectives corresponded to them. The next chapter will reconstruct the composition of the Li Hsün faction, and the time and place of the formation of this political alignment. Turning to Chapter Four, we shall examine the rise to power and political methods of Li Hsün, and the accomplishments of his administration. Next, the preparation, execution and repercussions of the Sweet Dew Incident will be discussed in detail. This final chapter will also summarize the essential points made in the study.
The Sources of the Standard Works on the Li Hsün Faction and the Sweet Dew Incident

The bulk of our information regarding the Li Hsün faction and the Sweet Dew Incident is contained in the standard works on T'ang history: the CTS, HTS, and the TCTC. The biography (lieh-chuan) section of both the CTS (169) and the HTS (179) devotes an entire chapter of roughly the same length to the Li Hsün faction members. The most detailed coverage of the event is located in the biography of Li Hsün (CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1). Additional information is scattered in the biographies of the eunuchs, Wang Shou-ch'eng and Ch'iu Shih-liang, also located in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 184.10; HTS 208.2, HTS 207.7). The Wen-tsung annals (pen-chi) in the CTS (17a-b) also contains relevant details. In the TCTC an account of the entire event with about the same degree of comprehensiveness as the two T'ang-shu runs sporadically from the years T'ai-ho 1 to K'ai-ch'eng 5 (827-840).

These records, which constitute the sources extant on the Sweet Dew Incident, actually underwent several stages of edition and revision, from the most primary accounts to the present "standard history" (cheng-shih) form. Since the most primary accounts are no longer extant, it would be in our interest to investigate: 1) the quantity and nature of these non-extant sources, 2) the political atmosphere under which they were originally written, 3) the extent to which these sources were available to the Sung historiographers, and 4) the guidelines and principles by which these sources were selected, processed and utilized for the compilation of the accounts in the CTS, HTS, and the TCTC. To undertake this inquiry, we make use of the TCTC K'ao-i (Examination of Discrepancies of Sources in the TCTC) and the bibliographies of
contemporary works compiled close to or in the Sung dynasty (hereafter referred to as Sung bibliographies).\(^\text{17}\)

The chief sources available to and utilized by all three standard works on our topic were of an official nature. These were the "veritable records" (shih-lu) drafted at the end of an emperor's reign and the imperial decrees and statutes issued during the period of the reign. Our concern here is to identify the exact "veritable record" used by the standard works in the narration of the Sweet Dew Incident and the sources of this "veritable record" itself. We note that in the two T'ang-shu (which were both used by the TCTC) the biographies of the Li Hsun faction members, rather than the Wen-tsung annals, provide the most comprehensive account of the entire event. From the only extant T'ang "veritable record", the Shun-tsung shih-lu,\(^\text{18}\) we know that the "veritable records" were most likely written in chronicle form and contained biographies of persons inserted at the time of their death.\(^\text{19}\) Since the Li Hsun faction was involved with a dramatic event such as the Sweet Dew Incident, there is little doubt that the biographies of its members would have been included in a "veritable record". Since the entire faction was executed immediately after the fiasco in late 835, when Wen-tsung was still the reigning emperor, we may conclude that the Wen-tsung shih-lu, and not any other, contained the biographies of Li Hsun and his associates. These same biographies in the Wen-tsung shih-lu were thus the chief sources of the standard works on the Sweet Dew Incident.

Although the Wen-tsung shih-lu has not been extant since Sung times, from the Sung bibliographies we know that the work was presented to Hsüan-tsung (846-859) in forty chapters, in the year 854.\(^\text{20}\)
The supervisor of the work was Wei Mo, who shortly afterwards became chief minister. His staff in the project included Chiang Chieh, a descendant from a family of historiographers. In general, biographical materials for the "veritable records" were incorporated in their entirety from "accounts of conduct" (hsing-chuang) and tomb inscriptions. These works were often written at the request of family relatives by friends or colleagues of the subject of the biography. However, in the case of notorious men, such as the Li Hsün faction members were conceived to be, no one would have dared to write and present favourable "accounts of conduct" on their behalf.

The negative portrayal of the Li Hsün faction most likely began with the extreme sensitivity and concern of the eunuchs about their role in history. For the "crime" of engineering the anti-eunuch coup, the entire faction was executed under the commands of the triumphant eunuchs, while the officialdom was terrorized and left with no alternative but to obey the orders of the eunuchs. One of these orders, issued and carried out on the day after the sweet dew coup was launched, was for Ling-hu Ch'u, then the vice-president of the Left of the State Affairs Department (shang-shu sheng), to draft an imperial decree to proclaim throughout the empire the guilty acts of Li Hsün, Wang Yai and their faction. This decree is no longer extant, but the standard works indicate it to be hostile towards the Li Hsün group. Since it was written almost immediately after the fiasco of 835, it must have constituted the first written work to portray the Li Hsün men with a negative bias. Several other imperial decrees still extant were also drafted in the days immediately following the crisis, in the form of prosecution orders for the Li Hsün supporters, appointment notices of new chief ministers, and an "act of
grace" accompanying a change of reign title in 836. In all these
decrees, the conspicuous apologetic tone of the emperor Wen-tsung,
in whose name they were drafted, suggests strongly that they might
have been dictated to Ling-hu Ch'u by the vengeful eunuchs. If Ling-
hu Ch'u, a respectable and high ranking veteran official, could be forced
to yield to the commands of the eunuchs, we can imagine the greater
pressures exerted on the minor history officials, who wrote the "diaries
of activity and repose" (ch'i-chü chu). We have evidence that the
interference of the eunuchs in history writing included removing the
names of the Li Hsiin men from various files, such as those in the Han-
lin Academy, and the ministry of Civil Office. Such was the immediate
political situation under which the initial unfavourable conception of
the Li Hsiin faction found its way into historical records.

In 854, when Wei Mo and his staff were faced with the task of
drafting the biographies of the Li Hsiin faction members in the Wen-
tsung shih-lu, friendly "accounts of conduct" submitted on the behalf
of the faction members were absent. Wei Mo and his staff thus had
available only the documents mentioned above: the imperial decrees
and edicts denouncing the alleged revolt of the Li Hsiin faction, the
revised files in various administrative offices, and the "diaries of
activity and repose", all of which were marked with the eunuch imprint.
We note that in 854, the Li Hsiin faction was still in political disgrace,
and the eunuchs had not to any degree relinquished their arbitrary
powers. Wei Mo and his staff, under the continued eunuch "supervision"
in history writing, and faced with the absence of alternative and
independent sources, could not but produce a Wen-tsung shih-lu coloured
with the same harsh negative bias against the Li Hsiin faction that is
evident in the extant imperial decrees drafted in late 835.

Apart from the Wen-tsung shih-lu, the preceding Mu-tsung and Ching-tsung shih-lu and the restored Wu-tsung and Hsuan-tsung shih-lu were available to the standard works. These, however, do not seem to have much relevance to our search for biographical sources of the Li Hsun faction members. The fact that the entire faction died together indicates that their biographies would not have been scattered in various "veritable records", but they would have been drawn up by the same history officials and inserted in the same place in the Wen-tsung shih-lu. This fact further accounts for the general consistency in the narration of the event in the standard works, which were based on the Wen-tsung shih-lu. Nevertheless, we can still discern certain minor discrepancies. One category of discrepancy lies in the CTS lacking certain records of incidents related in both the HTS and the TCTC. The other group of discrepancies results from the TCTC's rejection of certain additional information in preference for the CTS account, while the HTS accepts the information uncritically. These discrepancies may be partly attributed to the relative availability of additional non-official sources to each standard work. Of the three, the CTS seems to have adhered most faithfully to the material of the official "veritable records". Non-official sources, in the category of "miscellaneous histories" (tsa-shih) and anecdotes (hsiao-shuo) had been destroyed in the Huang Ch'ao rebellions (874-884) and had not yet been replaced when the CTS was compiled. On the other hand, the compilers of the HTS and the TCTC, living in an age of relative stability, had available many restored sources, a great amount of them non-official in nature. Using the TCTC K'ao-l and the Sung bibliographies,
we are able to obtain crucial information about the nature and content of these non-official sources, most of which are not extant (see Appendix I).

While dealing with the sources of the Wen-tsung shih-lu, we earlier described the initial unfavourable portrayal of the Li Hsün faction that resulted from the pressures of the eunuchs on history writing. The compilers of the standard works were in particular conscious of the didactic import of historiography. Feeling no sympathy for the Li Hsün faction's unorthodox and bold political methods, they not only took over from the Wen-tsung shih-lu the initial portrayal of the faction as unscrupulous scoundrels, but they even stereotyped and standardized the Li Hsün faction as the prime negative example of moral and political behaviour. Because Li Hsün and Cheng Chu had the most unorthodox political careers, they are singled out by all three standard works to be the key figures of the faction. Accordingly they are given the bulk of the blame for the faction's bold political maneuvers. On the other hand, the role of respectable officials such as Wang Yai and Chia Su has been downplayed, to the extent that their participation in the faction is not easily recognized. However, that these men received some amount of blame from the Sung historiographers, along with Li Hsün and Cheng Chu, is evident in the fact that the biographies of the faction members, including those of Wang Yai and Chia Su, are grouped into one biography chapter in the two T'ang-shu.

In all three standard works, the negative appraisals of the Li Hsün faction members are generally consistent, despite the availability of supplementary non-official sources to the HTS and the TCTC. We can ascribe this consistency partly to the absence of favourable material
in the supplementary sources, and partly to the historiographers' reluctance to use any favourable material to upset or contradict their stereotyped negative appraisal. Indeed, we have an example of the latter. The still extant document, "an act of grace" promulgated in 901, absolves in explicit terms the guilt of the Li Hsun faction members and their families. It also declares that the Li Hsun faction was merely executing imperial orders in the Sweet Dew Incident. This decree, however, has not been taken into account by the Sung historiographers in their censure of the Li Hsun faction. Within the standard works themselves, we find material which conflicts with the negative appraisal. For example, Li Hsiin is denounced as traitorous at the end of the account, but elsewhere in the standard account it is admitted that he was only co-operating with the emperor Wen-tsung at a time that everyone in the empire, including respectable bureaucrats, was confident that Li Hsun could bring peace to the world. We can understand this conflicting evidence once we realize that the accounts themselves were usually written by two categories of history officials with different functions. The minor history officials wrote the narrative of the event from the primary records, while the chief compiler, or supervisor of the standard works, being especially concerned about the didactic import of historiography, wrote the appraisal section appended at the end of the narrative.

In the appraisals themselves, there is a slight variance in the degree of denunciation of the Li Hsun faction. The CTS seems to exercise the mildest degree, while the HTS indicates the harshest blame. We stated earlier that the HTS sometimes accepts non-official material uncritically, while the TCTC indicates more critical judgment.
It would seem that the HTS drew upon unfavourable additional sources with the effect of strengthening the negative image of the Li Hsun faction members. From what little we know from the TCTC K’ao-i about the additional sources listed in Appendix I, it would seem that they do not necessarily contain material favourable to the Li Hsun faction members. Even if these works were still extant, it would not necessarily mean that we would have sources to support a favourable re-appraisal of the event. A favourable re-appraisal, however, is not the purpose of this study, although it may be the outcome. The purpose of inquiring into the sources of the standard works on the Li Hsun faction and accounting for consistencies and discrepancies amongst these works is only to equip ourselves with a more critical approach to their accounts and appraisals.
CHAPTER TWO. THE POLITICAL REALITIES OF WEN-TSUNG'S REIGN

During Li Hsun's rise to power, he announced to the emperor Wen-tsung his faction's secret "strategy of peace" (T'ai-p'ing chih-ts'e). They wished to "first slaughter the eunuchs, recover the Ho-huang region, drive back the barbarians, and to reassert central control over the various military provinces in Ho-pei."\(^1\) We observe in this strategy three targets: 1) encroachments by the border tribes, 2) recalcitrancy in the Northeast, and 3) eunuch menace in the political arena. A fourth objective, not expressed above but which constituted one of the Li Hsun faction's main concerns when they came to power, was factionalism in the central bureaucracy in Ch'ang-an. In this chapter we shall discuss these four political realities with respect to their development in the early part of Wen-tsung's reign, prior to the arrival of the Li Hsun faction at the court of Ch'ang-an.

Let us first look briefly at the situation of post-rebellion T'ang vis-à-vis its border tribes: the Uighur in the north, the T'u-fan (Tibetans) in the west, and the Nan-chao in the southwest. Of these three, the Uighur tribes had been the friendliest neighbours to the T'ang dynasty.\(^2\) During the An-Shih rebellions, they had assisted the central government in the recovery of the T'ang capitals. This service, however, bound post-rebellion T'ang to an unequal treaty of "peace through marriage terms" (ho-ch'\'in) and "peace through trade terms" (ho-shih). Under the terms of the first part of the agreement, T'ang married princesses to Uighur dignitaries.\(^3\) To the advantage of the T'ang dynasty, the marriage bond established a general peace and an alliance with the Uighur which acted as a deterrent to encroachments from other border tribes, particularly the T'u-fan. The second part
of the agreement, however, caused tremendous strains to the state treasury, then already drained by the expensive punitive campaigns against the An-Shih forces. The arrangement made it mandatory for the central government to buy, at exorbitant prices in silk, all the horses the Uighur sent every year, even though most of these horses arrived in a sickly and unusable state. Throughout the post-rebellion period, as long as the marriage and "horse-trade" transactions were maintained, Chinese-Uighur relations remained generally stable. Toward the end of Wen-tsung's reign, a culmination of natural disasters, internal chaos and external invasions by the Kirghiz began to weaken the Uighur tribes, until they were finally driven northward in Wu-tsung's reign (840-846).

In general, the foreign policy of post-rebellion T'ang was orientated towards alliance with the Uighur to resist the T'u-fan on the western borders. While the Uighur proved to be the friendliest border tribe, the T'u-fan showed themselves to be the most troublesome external enemy to the T'ang dynasty. The Uighur, a nomadic tribe, were interested only in T'ang material wealth, but the T'u-fan coveted both T'ang territory and its material goods. During the An-Shih rebellions, when all the T'ang garrisons had been recalled to the capitals for their defence, the T'u-fan took the opportunity to occupy the entire region of Ho-huang (modern day Kansu, northern Ch'ing-hai and eastern Sinkiang). Apart from creating profound embarrassment to the T'ang empire, the T'u-fan occupation of this strategic region exposed the capital of Ch'ang-an. Furthermore, annual attacks of the northwest frontiers by the T'u-fan made futile any attempts to re-assert control over the region. By the first part of Wen-tsung's reign, the recovery of Ho-huang was still a topic of heated debate in the court, and
frequently aggravated factional strife in the central bureaucracy. In one instance, the T'u-fan commander of Wei-chou, a city of strategic importance, surrendered to T'ang authorities in 831. By the terms of a peace treaty previously signed with the T'u-fan, the surrender could not be accepted. Despite the counsel of Li Te-yü (Li faction) to take over Wei-chou immediately and from there launch an attack against the T'u-fan, the policy of "indulgence" (ku-hsi) advocated by his political rival, Niu Seng-ju (Niu faction), was adopted. Niu Seng-ju's counsel proved fallible and the T'ang government lost a crucial opportunity to regain lost territory. A few years later, when Li Hsun came to power, he expressed as his priority in foreign policy the recovery of Ho-huang. However, plans were not even drafted towards this objective when his faction suffered total annihilation in late 835. To the advantage of the T'ang dynasty, however, the T'u-fan themselves had been disintegrating since the second reign period of Wen-tsung (K'ail-ch'eng, 836-840).

In 848, during Hsuan-tsung's reign, a combination of natural disasters and internal chaos brought the T'u-fan tribes to a fate similar to that of the Uighur. Just when the Uighur and the T'u-fan were suffering internal disintegration, another neighbour on the southwestern borders was on the rise to power. This was the Nan-chao, who began attacking T'ang territory during the first part of Wen-tsung's reign. Nan-chao aggression became a real menace to the T'ang government after 859 and, for this reason, it was partly responsible for the final eclipse of the T'ang dynasty.

Next, let us deal with the problem of provincial militarism in post-rebellion T'ang. Although the An-Shih forces in Ho-pei were
finally quelled, the whole northeast region could not again be brought under central control in the T'ang dynasty. The semi-autonomy of these provinces (fan-chên), Wei-po, Yu-chou and Ch'eng-te, meant that the T'ang central government had no effective say in local succession and received no provincial taxes from them. Obviously, the situation undermined the credibility of central authority in Ch'ang-an. Moreover, these semi-autonomous provinces served as moral and physical support for rebellious military governors elsewhere in the empire. Through costly campaigns, the Yuan-ho Restoration under Hsien-tsung (805-820) achieved a considerable degree of stability with the provinces. Even so, in 815, two daring military governors still successfully engineered the assassination of Wu Yuan-heng, then a chief minister in the court of Ch'ang-an.

When Wen-tsung ascended to the throne in 827, a succession dispute involving the military governor of Hêng-hai (Honan), Li T'ung-chieh, culminated in a direct confrontation with central forces. The rebellion of Li T'ung-chieh took three years to crush. In this disruption, it was evident even at the time that the support of the Ho-peî military governors enabled Li T'ung-chieh to hold on for a longer period than otherwise would have been possible. About the same time, another incident of provincial recalcitrancy manifested itself in An-nan, (Vietnam). There, the protector-general, Han Yüeh (a participant in the Sweet Dew Incident), was evicted by the local forces. Two years later, Li Chiang, a respectable central government official, was murdered in a local mutiny in Shan-nan (Szuchuan). These events were indicative of the urgency to resolve the precarious balance of central and provincial powers, specifically that which existed in the northeastern Ho-peî provinces. Such a resolution was one of Li Hsün's objectives, but again, the faction
collapsed before it had the opportunity to deal with this issue.

In the face of an external threat posed by the bordering tribes on the one hand, and an internal one manifested by rebellious military governors on the other, a strong unanimous court in Ch'ang-an was necessary if these problems were to be dealt with. In Wen-tsung's reign, however, the deliberation process and regular functions of the court were made incompetent and confused by the conspicuous presence of eunuch interference in the Inner Court and factional strife in the Outer. These two political realities will be examined in detail, since they together constituted the basic political setting for the activities of the Li Hsün faction.

In pre-modern Chinese history, no dynasty appears to have been free of the disruptive impact of eunuchs in politics. T'ang eunuchs are generally recognized to have been the most threatening to the survival of the political system and, in effect, the dynasty itself. Despite the paucity of primary sources on eunuch affairs, recent scholarship has nevertheless succeeded in unravelling certain problems of the historical development and institutional foundations of eunuch power in the T'ang dynasty. We shall first examine the several areas of eunuch involvement up to the reign of Wen-tsung, and then trace Wen-tsung's experience with his court eunuchs prior to the arrival of the Li Hsün faction to the political arena.

The T'ang eunuchs were chiefly recruited from southern China, and originally served only as domestic servants in the inner quarters of the court. The foundations for eunuch power were gradually laid from the first century of T'ang rule (618-705), but the activities of the eunuchs up to the reign of Hsüan-tsung (712-756) were largely
restricted to personal attendance and companionship to princes and emperors and to routine management of inner palace affairs and the imperial harem. In Hsuan-tsung's reign, opportunities for intense political participation were first available to and utilized by the legendized eunuch personality, Kao Li-shih. Later, the disintegrative forces of the An-Shih rebellions created further institutional gains for the court eunuchs. By the year 820, of the court eunuchs serving in the department of Inner Attendance (nei-shih sheng), 4,618 were holding official ranks. Out of this number, 1,698 were conferred with ranks of third degree and above. By the time Wen-tsung ascended to the throne, eunuch power and influence were strongly felt in military, economic, religious and political affairs, including the imperial succession issue.

In the T'ang imperial city of Ch'ang-an, there existed two separate military forces: the Guards (wei) or the Southern Armies, and the Palace Armies (chin-chün) or the Northern Armies. The Guards included the left and right wings of the Tso-yu, Hsiao, Wu, Wei, Ling-chün, and later, the Chin-wu (which the Li Hsun faction used in the coup), the Chien-men, and the Ch'ien-niu. The Palace Armies were composed of the left and right wings of the Yü-lin, Lung-wu, Shen-wu, and later, the Shen-ts'e. Originally, the roles of the Northern and Southern Armies did not differ in providing defense for the emperor. After the disappearance of the militia (fu-ping) system in the eighth century, both military forces were recruited from mercenaries. However, while the Guards gradually diminished in military effectiveness, with some armies retaining only ceremonial roles during court audiences with the emperor, the Palace Armies expanded in military strength and signi-
ficance. By the end of Hsüan-tsung's reign (712-756) the eunuchs had managed to obtain control of this superior military force.

The Shen-ts'e had originally been a northwest frontier garrison force, which in 763 transferred operations to Ch'ang-an under the management of eunuchs. In 786 it was transformed into a regular palace army charged with the defence of the emperor. In the tradition of the other armies at the capital, it was also divided into the left and right wings. Except for the period 770-783, the Shen ts'e Armies were controlled by two commanding eunuch generals (chung-wei), one of the Left and one of the Right. This control of the Shen-ts'e Armies proved to be the most solid bulwark of eunuch power in post-rebellion T'ang. Until 810, the Shen-ts'e Armies eclipsed the other palace armies on the basis of professionalism in leadership, discipline, combat strength and organization. In recruitment, training and expansion, the Shen-ts'e Armies received enormous imperial patronage. It was thus no wonder that these armies represented the most important support for the throne in quelling internal and external disruptions between 786-810. However, after 810, the corruption and arrogance of the Shen-ts'e Armies rendered them incompetent in terms of meeting external and even internal challenges. Nevertheless, in court politics and intrigues, the Shen-ts'e Armies continued to exert their influence until the end of the dynasty. From the rise to predominance until the final destruction of the powers of the eunuchs, several attempts to curb the power of the eunuchs failed due to the unsuccessful uprooting of the control of the eunuchs over the Shen-ts'e Armies.

Apart from actually commanding the Palace Armies, the eunuchs in post-rebellion T'ang were also put in charge of the storage of military
The eunuchs could thereby acquire detailed knowledge of any military campaign and at the same time put away weapons for their own palace intrigues. Another aspect of the military power of the eunuchs was its control of transportation facilities; the supervision of the rearing of horses and the administration of postal routes. These were two indirect methods which could facilitate considerably the eunuchs' observation and influence of military activities.

The third military base of eunuch strength was the practice of appointing eunuchs out of the capital as army supervisors (chien-chün). Under this system, eunuchs responsible to the emperor alone were attached to military governors throughout the empire. Through such direct contact with military governors, the eunuchs had the opportunity to enrich themselves by receiving bribes from the provincial authorities. They could also acquire practical military experience and enlist the support of the military governors for their own intrigues in Ch'ang-an. In summary, by means of control in the military sphere, the eunuchs were in a position to diminish drastically the military responsibilities and authority of the Ministry of War (ping-pu), which was under the control of the central bureaucracy.

Next, let us look briefly at the eunuchs' economic base of power. In the T'ang central administration, the emperor's funds were separate from state revenues. It was in Hsüan-tsung's reign (712-756) that the emperor's own treasury became enriched at the expense of the state treasury. From Su-tsung's reign (756-762) on, it was evident that the eunuchs had gained complete control of the emperor's private treasury. It was from this base of control that
the eunuchs were able to directly influence the emperor to their own advantage. Another aspect of the economic power of the eunuchs lay in the system of palace marketing (kung-shih), by which the eunuchs were responsible for selecting foods for the palaces at low prices from local markets, cheating the merchants and farmers while enriching themselves. In fact, the eunuchs accumulated so much capital that many bought villas and patronized their own favourites, as in the case of the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng, who patronized Cheng Chu. The eunuchs were also put in charge of the construction of palace works, through which they received handsome sums of money from the emperor. From this economic basis of control, then, the eunuchs were able to exert their influence on a great number of people, both inside and outside the court of Ch'ang-an.

In religious matters, the eunuchs also proved to be influential. Serving as commissioners of Good Works (kung-te shih) in the two capitals, the eunuchs were charged with the supervision of the Buddhist and Taoist faiths, as well as the management of foreign monks in the empire. Most eunuchs were of the Buddhist religion, a consoling faith they adopted to ease the emotional pain over their physical mutilation. Through their generous donations to the Buddhist clergy and their own control of religion in the capitals, the eunuchs again undermined the central bureaucracy, which administered an equivalent bureau for religious matters, the Ministry of Rites (li-pu).

At this point, we arrive at a discussion of eunuch power in the political domain. In the first part of the T'ang dynasty, the practice of sending out eunuchs envoys for political missions first set the stage for eunuch participation in the political system. The political
influence of the eunuchs was institutionalized by Tai-tsung's reign (763-779) with the establishment of the Shu-mi Council, a non-official organ of advisers completely staffed by eunuchs in the court. The functions of the Shu-mi Council included acting as the emperor's personal secretariat, circulating and transmitting memorials from the central bureaucracy and imperial edicts from the emperor to his subjects. At the head of the Shu-mi Council, which had no offices for administration, were two councillors (shu-mi shih) who were in a position to forge imperial edicts and falsify memorials to their own advantage. By the reign of Wen-tsung, the Shu-mi councillors even participated in political deliberations at an equal footing with the chief ministers from the central bureaucracy and the scholars from the Han-lin Academy. The two Shu-mi councillors and the two Shen-ts'e generals were the most powerful court eunuchs in late T'ang.

With a firm hold secured in the military, economic and political domains of the Ch'ang-an court, the extent of eunuch power was manifested most apparently in imperial succession. Even before the eunuchs had begun to usurp the imperial prerogatives, the T'ang throne had never been secure. As early as Hsuan-tsung's reign (712-756), eunuch interference in imperial succession was already evident in the unique relationship between the eunuch Kao Li-shih and the emperor Hsuan-tsung. In 805, eunuch activities began to thrust forward in an open manner, forcing the emperor Shun-tsung to abdicate, while enthroning his son, Hsien-tsung. From Hsien-tsung on, all other T'ang emperors except Ching-tsung were set on the throne by the eunuchs. To complicate the situation, the Shen-ts'e generals and the Shu-mi councillors often supported different candidates for the throne. The decisions of the
Shen-ts'e generals, however, always prevailed in the end.\textsuperscript{33} This outcome of succession struggles without doubt indicates the greater strength of the Shen-ts'e generals in comparison to that of the Shu-mi councillors.

In 820, Hsien-tsung was assassinated by the eunuchs even though they had first enthroned him. In this incident the powerful eunuchs, Ch'en Hung-chih and Wang Shou-ch'eng, who had actually engineered the assassination, merely killed some minor eunuchs in order to hide their guilt. These two eunuchs then set up Mu-tsung (821-825). The successor to Mu-tsung, Ching-tsung (825-827), also met with sudden death. Even at the time, it was believed without a doubt that Hsien-tsung's assassins were again behind this incident. These two assassinations had occurred only within six years of each other, but the assassins, referred to as the "Yüan-ho rebel clique" (Yüan-ho ni-tang) could not be openly accused of their crime. In the situation where the "eunuchs became increasingly arbitrary, securing in their palms the power of setting up emperors, and issuing forth power from the emperor's right,"\textsuperscript{34} Wen-tsung's apprehensive feelings and his personality combined to aggravate the tensions of his reign. The standard histories credit Wen-tsung with little will-power, character and decisiveness. However, if we examine Wen-tsung's involvement in an anti-eunuch strategy (manifested in the Special Examination Event of 828, the Sung Shen-hsi Affair of 831 and the Sweet Dew Incident of 835) it becomes apparent that, contrary to the traditional viewpoint that the essence of his politics was recklessness, Wen-tsung's political moves were experimental but calculated.

When Wen-tsung first came to the throne, he assumed the image of
a "virtuous ruler" by abolishing the excesses which had accompanied the reigns of his predecessors, Mu-tsung and Ching-tsung. These measures included the removal from his palaces of hunting dogs, popular artists, musicians and some three thousand palace women. By 828, the second year of his reign, he was already involved with a confrontation between the court eunuchs and the bureaucrats. This was the special examination incident in which over one hundred candidates responded to Wen-tsung's request for specific directives and guidelines to his reign. Liu Fen, a recent graduate of the literary (chin-shih) degree, submitted an eloquent paper which fiercely attacked the court eunuchs in the following manner:

[I feel that] what your majesty should worry about is that: the palaces are about to overturn, the state is about to enter a precarious phase, the empire is about to topple, and that the country is about to fall into chaos...why must you allow the five or six favourite [eunuchs] to control the great administration of the empire, such that on the outside they monopolize your mandate and that on the inside they usurp your prerogatives... Of your various subjects none dares to point out the court eunuchs' crimes, and the Son of Heaven himself could not control their minds...The court eunuchs usurp the authority of the imperial succession. They entrapped the former emperor [Ching-tsung] such that the end of his reign could not be set straight; thus, [when the throne came to you] the beginning of your reign could not be properly established...If your majesty could actually take away the state authority [from the eunuchs] and return it to the chief ministers, and bring back military power to the generals, then there is nowhere that your mind does not reach, and nowhere that your conduct does not bring trust in...

Both the court officials and the candidates themselves considered Liu Fen's reply to be the most brilliant, yet it did not pass. It was believed that because the paper launched a bold attack upon the eunuchs, the examination officials, Feng Su and Chia Su (a participant in the Sweet Dew Incident), dared not risk eunuch retaliation. Consequently Liu Fen's political career suffered a setback, and he
died later in obscure employment. Wen-tsung's involvement in this event has been ignored in the standard histories. We know that it was Wen-tsung himself who designated and personally supervised the special examination. The timing of the examination in the second year of his reign suggests that Wen-tsung's motive may well have been to test the atmosphere of his central bureaucracy as well as the response of his court eunuchs, and on that basis to orientate his reign. The fact that Liu Fen's reply did not pass, and that there were no strong protests from the central bureaucracy on that decision, doubtlessly indicated to Wen-tsung that he could not depend upon his ministers to initiate an anti-eunuch stand. That he did not interfere and reverse the decision of the examiners suggests further that he was not totally rash in his politics, but knew when to stop.

Liu Fen's paper did not bring him honour at the time, but it was widely circulated within the central bureaucracy. The audacious spirit with which he attacked the eunuchs did indeed influence both Wen-tsung and the 'sweet dew' plotters seven years later. Examining the Liu Fen paper, we find that at least Wen-tsung and Li Hsun were familiar with its allusions. During Li Hsun's rise to power the emperor had deliberately brought up an anti-eunuch allusion in the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un-chiu) at which Li Hsun quickly offered the appropriate explanation drawn from Liu Fen's paper. Shu Yuan-yü also appeared to have been affected by the examination reply. When he was about to be executed for his involvement in the sweet dew coup of late 835, he proudly compared himself to the fate of Ch'ao Ch'uo and Chang Hua, respected ministers who had wrongfully been treated. Liu Fen had also compared himself to these individuals in his examination
paper. As for Chia Su, it could well have been that, as an examiner at the time, under the fear of eunuch retaliation, he did not dare take a radical stand and pass Liu Fen. Later, however, urged on by his guilt in Liu Fen's disgrace and the worsening eunuch menace in the court, he seemed to have decided to join Li Hsun and Shu Yuan-yü in their anti-eunuch stands.

The Liu Fen incident indicates Wen-tsung's first and indirect involvement in anti-eunuch activities. Two years later, the emperor actually attempted a more direct confrontation with his court eunuchs. This experiment precipitated the tragic Sung Shen-hsi Affair. Sung Shen-hsi had been a Han-lin scholar whom Wen-tsung promoted to chief minister on the basis of his proven loyalty and reliability, for the purpose of devising an anti-eunuch strategy. Half a year after he became chief minister, the incident passed through a strange phase. The standard works tell us that soon Sung Shen-hsi related his anti-eunuch plans to Wang Fan, who leaked them out to Cheng Chu and the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng. The latter two then prepared for a counter-attack, and concocted the story that Sung Shen-hsi had attempted to betray the present emperor and to set up Wen-tsung's brother as emperor. The standard works further state that Wen-tsung's innate gullibility led him to believe in the accusation against Sung Shen-hsi, and accordingly allowed Wang Shou-ch'eng to exterminate the clan relations of Sung Shen-hsi. It was due to the protests of an upright eunuch Ma Ts'un-liang and concerted appeals from the central bureaucracy that Sung Shen-hsi's own life was spared. However, he soon died in his place of exile. For several years afterwards, the punishment of Sung Shen-hsi was considered grossly unjust. After his death, there were continuous years of drought.
and locust epidemics, thought to be an expression of heaven's displeasure at the injustices of men. 43

The narration of this incident in the standard works again leaves the role played by Wen-tsung unclear. The gullibility of the emperor does not adequately explain why he believed without a doubt, the alleged treachery of Sung Shen-hsi (whom he trusted) which was concocted by the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng (whom he distrusted and feared). In the Liu Fen incident we saw that Wen-tsung hid himself in the background as soon as it was evident that there did not exist daring initiatives for an anti-eunuch confrontation in his bureaucracy. It seems that Wen-tsung again knew when to stop as soon as his plans with Sung Shen-hsi were foiled. His maneuver here was a quick cover-up of his part in the entire affair. Accordingly, he acted startled and enraged at the alleged conspiracy of Sung Shen-hsi. Thus, unexpectedly and abruptly, the experiment with Sung Shen-hsi was aborted. From this incident, however, Wen-tsung learned a lesson in future tactics. The key to success in anti-eunuch plans must lie in dispelling the suspicions of the eunuchs. We can now see why Wang Fan and Cheng Chu, who had proved their loyalty to the eunuchs and thereby would not arouse their suspicions, were appropriate choices of men for Wen-tsung and Li Hsün to include and manipulate for the execution of anti-eunuch plans. Li Hsün, recommended by the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng himself, on that basis alone could win special favour from the emperor without unusual suspicion from the eunuchs. On the other hand, the emperor most likely had in mind to employ or promote through these men other individuals of erudite learning (Shu Yuan-yü) and of political skills and experience (Wang Yai and Chia Su). As with the Liu Fen incident, the Sung Shen-hsi
experiment did not result in curbing the power of the eunuchs. However, the two incidents prepared Wen-tsung for a future event of an even more drastic nature, the Sweet Dew Incident of 835, which we shall deal with in Chapter Five.

The fourth political reality of Wen-tsung's reign was factionalism in the central bureaucracy. Let us first distinguish our use of the term "faction" from its related forms "party" and "clique", to refer to alignments in the court of Ch'ang-an in late T'ang. The Chinese equivalent for all these terms is tang or tang-p'ai and the act of forming a political alignment is pejoratively called p'eng-tang. The political scientists, Lasswell and Kaplan, are more specific in their use of the term:

A faction may be described as a continuing alignment within a decision-making group: a sub-group concurring in all decisions relating to a specified interest. The interest may concern expediency only...

A "faction" is similar to a "party" in that it operates through formal mechanism, but it is less permant an organization. A "clique" is differentiated from a "faction" in being less organized and more personalized, exerting influences through informal mechanisms only. Lasswell and Kaplan identify the "decision-making group" as the "party" in the Western sense. In this respect, their definition of "faction" seems inapplicable to alignments in the T'ang court, as the factions discussed in this study were independent of a larger organization. The political life of the Ch'ang-an court was generally polarized between the Inner and the Outer courts, that is, the "within" and the "without". The former was manifested by eunuch circles, the imperial harem, imperial relatives and other informal channels such as the Han-lin Academy, all of which had direct access to the emperor.
The latter was represented by the central bureaucracy, which functioned through established governmental procedures. Now, if we take the liberty to substitute the late T'ang central bureaucracy for the "decision-making group", then the Lasswell/Kaplan definition may be adopted for our purpose. The Li Hsun, Wang Shu-wen, Niu and Li groups were all alignments in the central bureaucracy during their respective periods of administration, and thus will be referred to as "factions". The eunuchs also aligned themselves, but since they did not assume regular bureaucratic posts, but operated conspiratorially behind the scenes, the term "cliques" then applies to their alignments.

A faction could have been formed on the basis of expediency, with or without long-term policies and interest, and it becomes the "dominant faction" when its authorized executive powers overshadow by far those of opposition factions in the central bureaucracy. In Shun-tsung's reign (805) the dominant faction was represented by Wang Shu-wen and his supporters. With authority sanctioned by the emperor, the Wang administration was able to bring about some sound political reforms. United hostility from both the opposition officials and the eunuchs, however, soon forced it to resign. Three years later, factionalism in the central bureaucracy began to be characterized by the infamous Niu and Li factional strife.45

The traditional and still most commonly accepted view of the development of the Niu and Li factional feud recognized two parties in the strife: the Niu faction headed by Niu Seng-ju and Li Tsung-min, and the Li faction, led by Li Te-yü and his father Li Chi-fu.46 The feud began in 808, during the examination scandal involving Li Chi-fu, chief minister at the time, and the candidates Niu Seng-ju,
Li Tsung-min and Huang-fu Shih. It seems that in their examination replies the three candidates severely criticized the administration, which was taken as a personal insult by Li Chi-fu, who then held a key position in the government. The enraged Li Chi-fu was believed to have influenced the emperor to demote the candidates as well as their mentors and examiners. Some time later Li Chi-fu was also phased out of the political arena. However, the scandal that developed from a mere examination incident was enough to polarize the political and social stands of supporters on both sides of the dispute in the central bureaucracy. In 821, another examination scandal deepened the factional strife. Ch'ien Hui, the examiner, was requested by some Li faction members to favour those candidates they recommended. It turned out that the successful candidates were related in one way or another to the Niu faction. An investigation into the case again concluded with the purge of many innocent men. Later, the feud was continued and intensified by Li Te-yü, who was determined to redeem the honour that his father had lost in the first examination scandal. Thus, it was in the form of examination scandals and other minor events that the factional feud between the Niu and Li leaders and partisans unfolded over forty years, during which time each faction experienced high and low points.

The Niu faction was at its height of influence during Hsuan-tsung's reign (846-859), and the Li faction was predominant during Wu-tsung's reign (840-846). It was during Wen-tsung's time that the struggle was most acute.

There exists in modern scholarship another point of view with regards to the development of the Niu and Li factional feud. Ts'en Chung-mien's analysis accepts only one dissenting party in the factional
feud, the Niu/Li faction led by Niu Seng-ju and Li Tsung-min. In this view, Li Chi-fu and Li Te-yü and their followers were upright men and not likely to form factions. There did not exist a "Li" faction as led by Li Te-yü and his father. The animosities in the central bureaucracy were created and perpetuated by the Niu/Li faction alone. The Sung historiographers, especially Ssu-ma Kuang, were for some reason partial towards the Niu/Li faction members, but hostile against Li Te-yü and Li Chi-fu. This attitude was responsible for a biased narration of events such as the examinations scandals. It was in particular responsible for the faulty conception of two polarized factions (i.e., the Niu and the Li) in the central bureaucracy. At close scrutiny, the analysis is fundamentally influenced by the application of traditional pejorative connotations to the term "faction", to the extent of subscribing to the classical Confucian cliché that the superior man (chün-tzu) did not form factions.51 The fact that, regardless of their "integrity" and other laudable points, Li Te-yü, Li Chi-fu and their followers did form and act as a political body against the Niu faction in the central bureaucracy is ignored. If we strip the negative and immoralistic overtone of the term "faction" and use it in the neutral sense, then Ts' en Chung-mien's argument for a "one faction only" feud loses credibility. For our purposes in this study, we shall instead accept the traditional view that Li Te-yü, Li Chi-fu and their partisans formed the Li faction by virtue of the fact that they constituted a political sub-group in the central bureaucracy, in the same way that Niu Seng-ju, Li Tsung-min and their supporters are identified with the Niu faction.

Next, dealing with the alignment factors of the Niu and Li factions,
we are presented with a more controversial issue than the initial development of the factional feud itself. According to the traditional and still most widely accepted view, the Niu and Li factions were aligned according to social status, geographical origins and the examination category through which the faction members emerged (the Niu through the literary (chin-shih) examinations, and the Li through the classical (ming-ching) examinations). This analysis is tremendously weakened by numerous cases of exceptions to the rule, as pointed out by scholars opposed to it. The same view maintains that the factional feud was a policy struggle, that the Niu faction supported a policy of "peaceful indulgence" (ku-hsi) whereas the Li faction recommended a policy of "using arms" (yung-ping). With reference to the Yuan-ho period and even extending to the early part of Wen-tsung's reign, this view seems applicable. During the last decade of the factional feud, however, this policy difference no longer appeared responsible for the cleavage of the two factions. From another point of view, Mamoru Tonami asserts that, regardless of all the above issues, it was political power alone that aligned factions. According to him, it was not the difference in policies between the two key political groups (aristocrats and examination bureaucrats), but the unique teacher-disciple relationship in the institution of provincial selection and employment (pi-chao) that exacerbated the course of the factional struggle. There yet remains Ts'en Chung-mien's argument that the feud was one-sided, characterized by a few upright "non-factionalists" involved in a struggle with the self-seeking individuals who belonged to the Niu/Li faction.

The cause for all these varying points of view regarding the political affinities of the two factions is not difficult to find.
In fact, it points to the most serious problem in the study of the Niu and Li factional dispute, the fact that faction members are not clearly identified or labelled with their own faction. The difficulty of identifying faction members may be properly appreciated once we recall that to be labelled "factionalist" was drastically detrimental to one's social and political life during the T'ang dynasty. When one was in fact a supporter and member of the Niu or Li faction, one would not admit it to the slightest degree. One's friends, staff and even a friendly historiographer would also deny any factionalist affiliations. Thus, in trying to assess the political affinities of a faction when even the faction members cannot be clearly identified presents an extremely frustrating task for the modern scholar. All the views presented earlier, which try to focus on the factors of alignment in each of the two factions, are credible to certain extents. For our purpose in this study, let us consider each view to be inclusively contributory to the understanding of the problem, rather than pick one exclusively over the others.

For forty years in the court of Ch'ang-an, the Niu and Li factional feud unfolded in the form of examination scandals, constant bickering, personality clashes and sometimes policy struggles. Mutual slander eventually led to changes of government between the Niu and Li factions, and promotions or demotions of civil officials corresponding to the fates of their political leaders. The intensity of the struggle was even reflected in the history writing and popular literature of the time. The most intense phases of the strife occurred during Wen-tsung's reign, which witnessed frequent turnovers of administration, as can be seen from the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Reign</th>
<th>Faction in Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>827</td>
<td>non-aligned bureaucrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>828</td>
<td>Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>829</td>
<td>both Li and Niu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>830-832</td>
<td>Niu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>833-834</td>
<td>Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>835</td>
<td>Li Hsün faction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>836-838</td>
<td>Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>838-840</td>
<td>Niu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, to Wen-tsung, factionalism in his court was a real and pressing priority. Dealing with Ho-pei recalcitrancy would seem to him even easier than eliminating the Niu and Li factional struggle. Factionalist leaders seemed too concerned with their own fate in the struggle to be interested in the problems of the empire. The other officials of the central bureaucracy were merely preoccupied about aligning themselves to the right faction. The polarization of the bureaucracy appeared almost total, and only a few of those who chose non-alignment with the Niu or Li survived in their political life. To whatever issue that the faction in power said yes, the opposition would advocate no, regardless of the soundness of the decision. One example of the deadlocks of crucial policies that resulted from the polarized bureaucracy is the Wei-chou Affair of 831 with the T'u-fan, as related earlier in this chapter.

In order to recruit further support, both factions' members resorted to outside help. Because the eunuchs were in a unique position of power, both the Niu and Li faction leaders befriended the few powerful ones which helped them gain political power. The court eunuchs were already divided amongst themselves by certain differences. The situation in which members of the civil bureaucracy individually sought them out further exacerbated the strained tension of Wen-tsung's reign. Indeed,
when Wen-tsung looked around him to solve the crucial problems of the empire, "he saw that his officials were using their emoluments to seek accommodation with the eunuchs, and of these there were none who upheld principles and risked their life." It was this polarization that caused Wen-tsung to lose confidence in his central bureaucracy, and turn instead to those who dared to be non-partisan in the strife. In 827, he managed to use these officials, but they soon either passed away or disappeared from the political scene. We observed that in 831 he put his hopes in Sung Shen-hsi, a non-aligned scholar in the Han-lin Academy. The incident ended in tragedy when the eunuchs were alerted by Wang Fan, a member of the central bureaucracy who was eager to win special favours from the eunuchs. In 834, Wen-tsung again preferred to turn to the non-aligned men in the Miu and Li factional strife. By putting his faith in Li Hsün and his men, Wen-tsung sought to solve not only eunuch problems, but also to eliminate the factionalism that had caused his court to lose credibility in the face of provincial aggression and foreign incursions. In the next chapter, we shall have occasion to look at the composition of the Li Hsün faction and also examine the circumstances under which the individuals came to form a political alignment.
CHAPTER THREE. THE LI HSÜN FACTION - COMPOSITION AND FORMATION

Composition of the Li Hsün Faction

Because of eunuch interference in history writing and the moralizing tendencies of the Sung historiographers, many facts of the Li Hsün faction and the Sweet Dew Incident remain unclear. One of these is the exact composition and actual formation of the Li Hsün alignment, and the degree of its predominance in the court of Ch'ang-an on the eve of its downfall in late 835. We are concerned with who the members of the faction were, and the factors and circumstances which brought them together as a political alignment. In the following pages, we shall reconstruct a composite biography of the faction and trace the formation or alignment process of the faction itself.

The Sung historiographers tend to allot full blame for the Sweet Dew Incident to certain individuals, particularly Li Hsün and Cheng Chu. The other members of the faction appear only vaguely, abruptly and in scattered spots in the standard accounts. As a result, some are not easily recognized as participants in the incident. Combining what we know about the non-extant source T'ai-ho yeh-shih, the "act of grace" promulgated in 901, and the three standard works, we find that the Li Hsün faction had a membership of at least seventeen active participants in the court of Ch'ang-an on the eve of the coup. These seventeen men are listed below with some pertinent biographical entries. The resulting table will constitute the basis for the examination of the entire faction, which focuses on the social backgrounds and political careers of the faction members.
**TABLE I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Family Background</th>
<th>Entrance to Politics</th>
<th>Positions Before Joining Li Hsun</th>
<th>Positions at Eve of Sweet Dew Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsun²</td>
<td>Lung-hsi Kan-su</td>
<td>clan grandson of Li Kuei, nephew of Li Feng-chi, both chief ministers in T'ang, from eminent Li lineage of Lung-hsi, which produced 11 chief ministers</td>
<td>chin-shih (823)</td>
<td>political exile</td>
<td>vice-president of Ministry of Rites, chief minister, Han-lin scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Yuan-yü³</td>
<td>Chiang-chou Huai-nan</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td>chin-shih (813)</td>
<td>redactor in Loyang</td>
<td>vice-president of Censorate, acting vice-president of Ministry of Punishment, chief minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Yai⁴</td>
<td>T'ai-yuan, Ho-tung</td>
<td>eminent Wang lineage in T'ai-yuan which produced 13 chief ministers</td>
<td>chin-shih (792)</td>
<td>commissioner of salt/iron, in charge of revenues, Hung-wen scholar, vice-president of Chancellery, chief minister</td>
<td>commissioner of salt, iron/tea monopoly, honorific ssu-k'ung k'ai-fu-i, chief minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chia Su⁵</td>
<td>Ho-nan</td>
<td>humble origins, but political distinction, his clan also produced one other chief minister</td>
<td>chin-shih (803)</td>
<td>mayor of Ch'ang-an, president of Censorate, chief minister</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cheng Chu⁶   | Chiang-chou Ho-chung | humble origins | medical skills (816) | vice-military governor of Chao-i | president of Ministry of Works, president of Censorate, president of Court of Imperial
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Father’s Occupation</th>
<th>Ancestry</th>
<th>Parents and Origins</th>
<th>Official Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wang Fan</td>
<td>Ch'ang-an</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td>father, kuan-chung was an official</td>
<td>chin-shih (810)</td>
<td>acting president of Ministry of Rites,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>prefect of Jun-chou, inspecting</td>
<td>in charge of finances, military governor of T'ai-yuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>commissioner of Che-hsi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuo Hsing-yu</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td></td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>prefect of Ju-chou, vice-president</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d, unknown)</td>
<td>of Censorate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Li-yen</td>
<td>Hsian-chou,</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td>father, huai-nan was an official</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>vice-president of Court of Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huai-nan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(805)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsiao-pen</td>
<td>Lung-hsi,</td>
<td>imperial family</td>
<td></td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>secretary of Ministry of Punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kan-su</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c. 810)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Yueh</td>
<td>Lang-chou,</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td></td>
<td>learning skills</td>
<td>president of Imperial Treasury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shan-nan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d, unknown)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Shih-i</td>
<td>Su-chou,</td>
<td>humble origins</td>
<td>father, chang-nan was Han-lin scholar and high official</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>inspecting censor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chiang-nan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(823)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'ien K'o-fu</td>
<td>Wu-chun,</td>
<td>father and grandfather</td>
<td>distinguished officials</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>secretary of Ministry of Rites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chiang-nan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d, unknown)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Chien-neng</td>
<td>Eminent lineage in Fan-yang, Ho-pei</td>
<td>116 chin-shih graduates (798-875), father, brothers distinguished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsiao Chieh</td>
<td>Direct descendants of imperial family of Liang dynasty (North and South Dynasty), brother was chief minister</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Chen-su</td>
<td>Imperial family</td>
<td>unknown director of Construction general of Chin-wu (Left)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Hung-mao</td>
<td>Humble origins, married sister of Empress dowager</td>
<td>unknown commissioner of the Right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei Feng</td>
<td>Humble origins, brother-in-law of Cheng Chu</td>
<td>unknown deputy prefect of Feng-hsiang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the T'ang dynasty, the social status (men-ti) of a bureaucrat was often far more prestigious and significant than his political accomplishments. The social background of a T'ang political figure had two inter-related components, lineage distinction and the place of origin. When referring to the place of origin, we are not necessarily dealing with the place of birth of the individual, but the geographical location of the original lineage. Glancing down Column Two of Table I, it seems clear that the place of origin did not form a basis of alignment in the Li Hsun faction. From the Northwest, we locate Li Hsun, Wang Fan, Li Chen-su and Li Hsiao-pen. From the Northeast we find Wang Yai, Chia Su, Cheng Chu and Lu Chien-neng. Finally, from the South, we identify Shu Yüan-yü, Lo Li-yen, Ku Shih-i, Han Yueh and Hsiao Chieh. The origins of Kuo Hsing-yü, Lu Hung-mao and Wei Feng cannot be traced.

Turning to the issue of family background, let us refer to the three general categories of T'ang bureaucrats: the eminent lineages (ming-tsu), the middle class scholar-official clans (shih-tsu), and the genuinely humble families (han-tsu). The eminent lineages had roots in the ruling class for at least a century, and from this category we isolate Li Hsun, Li Hsiao-pen, Li Chen-su (Lung-hsi Lis), Wang Yai (T'ai-yuan Wangs) and Hsiao Chieh (Liang imperial family of the Northern/Southern Dynasties). From the middle class scholar-official clans, which distinguished themselves by producing generations of scholars and officials, we find Chia Su, Wang Fan, Lo Li-yen, Ku Shih-i, Ch'ien K'o-fu and Lu Chien-neng. Finally, from the genuinely humble stratum, we have those faction members who advanced to political prominence during their own generation through learning or other means. Shu Yüan-yü
and Kuo Hsing-yü emerged through literary degrees, Han Yüeh through administrative skills, Cheng Chu through medical skills and Wei Feng and Lu Hung-mao through marriage relations.\(^{23}\)

In social background, the Li Hsün faction members ranged from eminent lineages to the socially maligned stratum represented by Cheng Chu, who merely relied on his skills in medicine to gain a position in society and in politics. Social background then did not constitute a common integrating factor in the Li Hsün alignment.

Next, dealing with the political careers of the faction members, Column Four of Table I indicates that, despite various social backgrounds and places of origin, all except four members were initiated into political life through the most orthodox method of the time, the metropolitan literary (chin-shih) examinations.\(^{24}\) Obtaining the literary degree did not lead to immediate employment in the central bureaucracy in Ch'ang-an. Rather than remain at the capital waiting indefinitely for an appropriate post, the majority of the Li Hsün faction at first obtained employment with the provincial authorities, which sought talent and reputation in an official rather than family influence and other factors.\(^{25}\) It is interesting to note that Li Hsün himself, who was quickly employed through the central bureaucracy as assistant instructor in the T'ai-hsüeh Academy, later preferred to seek employment on the staff of the military governor of Ho-yang. It would seem that occasionally patronage through the provincial authorities offered good prospects for subsequent advancement in one's political life.

The Sung historiographers denounce the Li Hsün faction particularly for their interest in personal political advancement. To explore this issue, it would be somewhat impractical to discuss the political careers...
of each faction member. We shall instead look at the political posts of the faction members before they joined the alignment with Li Hsün and on the eve of the Sweet Dew Incident. Column Five of Table I records the positions occupied before the individual became involved with the faction, and Column Six indicates the additional posts, transfers, and promotions gained by the eve of the Sweet Dew Incident. The following table is a simplification of the two columns to make the promotions more meaningful and readable.26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Before Joining Li Hsün</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>At Eve of Incident</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsün</td>
<td>political exile</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Yüan-yü</td>
<td>redactor</td>
<td>5°</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Yai</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>3°</td>
<td>ssu-k'ung k'ai-fu-i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chia Su</td>
<td>president of Censorate</td>
<td>3°</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheng Chu</td>
<td>vice military governor</td>
<td>6°?</td>
<td>president of a ministry</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Fan</td>
<td>acting president of a ministry</td>
<td>3°</td>
<td>president of a ministry</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuo Hsing-yü</td>
<td>vice president of Censorate</td>
<td>5°</td>
<td>president of a court</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Li-yen</td>
<td>vice-president of a court</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>deputy mayor of Ch'ang-an</td>
<td>4°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsiao-pen</td>
<td>secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>5°</td>
<td>vice-president of Censorate</td>
<td>4°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Ylieh</td>
<td>president of Imperial Treasury</td>
<td>3°</td>
<td>grand-general of Chin-wu Guards</td>
<td>3°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Shih-i</td>
<td>inspecting censor</td>
<td>8°</td>
<td>auxiliary secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>6°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'ien K'o-fu</td>
<td>secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>5°</td>
<td>acting secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>5°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Chien-neng</td>
<td>inspecting censor</td>
<td>8°</td>
<td>secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>5°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsiao Chieh</td>
<td>palace censor</td>
<td>7°</td>
<td>acting secretary of a ministry</td>
<td>5°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this table we observe that, for less than half of the faction (Li Hsun, Shu Yuan-yü, Cheng Chu, Kuo Hsing-yü, Ku Shih-i, Lu Chien-neng, Hsiao Chieh and Wei Feng), the promotions after joining the alignment were startling, as noted in a jump of at least two degrees. To appreciate more fully these quick promotions, it should be realized that they were effected in less than a year. However, the other faction members seemed to have experienced a more regular rate of promotion. Wang Yai, Chia Su and Wang Fan had the most extensive political careers even before they joined the alignment. Wang Yai had nothing much to gain from working with Li Hsun, except for an honorific rank to bring him to a first degree bureaucrat. Chia Su was already a third degree official prior to his identification with the Li Hsun faction. The only additional post he gained was that of a chief ministership, a rather regular promotion in view of his former political experience. Wang Fan experienced the most changes in his political career. After joining the Li Hsun alignment, he advanced to the presidency of the Ministry of Finance from his former position of acting president of the Ministry of Rites. This promotion also does not seem radical.

These promotions of the Li Hsun faction members may be viewed through a comparative perspective. In a recent study of the political careers of two hundred important T'ang central bureaucrats, Sun Kuo-tung works out the average lengths of promotional stages in public
office in the central bureaucracy. For example, it would ordinarily take a political figure 23.6 years from his first post to arrive at a chief ministership in the period 827-905. Applying the results of Sun Kuo-tung's study to the promotions of the Li Hsün faction members, we obtain the following figures:

### TABLE III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From First Post To-</th>
<th>Actual Time</th>
<th>Sun's Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsün</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>23.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Yuan-yü</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>23.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Yai</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>23.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chia Su</td>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>23.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheng Chu</td>
<td>president of a ministry</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Fan</td>
<td>president of a ministry</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuo Hsing-yü</td>
<td>president of a court</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Li-yen</td>
<td>president of a court</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Hsiao-pen</td>
<td>vice-president of Censorate</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Shih-i</td>
<td>auxiliary secretary</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsiao Chieh</td>
<td>acting secretary</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>14.2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first posting date cannot be obtained for some faction members, therefore the above table is somewhat incomplete. However, since we have the dates for the important members of the faction, the general conclusions would not be much affected. Looking at the last two columns of Table III we observe that in most cases, the career periods do correspond quite closely to Sun Kuo-tung's estimated averages. Only in two cases do we note the startlingly quick and unorthodox rise to power, Li Hsün rose to chief minister in a mere decade, despite a disastrous setback when he was exiled and stripped of his official privileges. Cheng Chu, who did not even go through the regular examination channels.
and had no influential family backing, obtained charge of a ministry in only seventeen years, when the average length of time was twenty-two years for most other bureaucrats. With the cases of Chia Su, Lo Li-yen and Hsiao Chieh, it even took them unusually longer than normal to obtain their final positions. These results show that the entire Li Hsün faction did not advance politically as suddenly as insisted upon by the Sung historiographers. In fact, for some members not much profit could be gained from a risky alliance with Li Hsün, a political exile. The thirst for power and influence could not fully account for the participation of all the faction members in the dangerous attempt to crush the powerful court eunuchs. The standard works also accuse the Li Hsün faction of corruption. We can only find evidence of two members who had unusual wealth accumulations at the time of their death in 835. One was Cheng Chu, who took bribes from both the Inner and Outer courts. It is no wonder, indeed, that when his residence was raided, an extraordinary amount of wealth was recovered. Cheng Chu had also encouraged the emperor to undertake palace constructions and other projects. Being put in charge of these works, it is most likely that Cheng Chu also cheated in the expense accounts, thereby further enriching himself. Wang Yai's residence also stored great wealth, but that does not necessarily mean that it was acquired through corruption. We note that Wang Yai had a rather successful political career, and came from an eminent lineage. Wang Yai could well have obtained his wealth from honest acquisitions during his political life. The standard works are thus unjustified in accusing the entire Li Hsün faction of corrupt practices on the basis of evidence obtained for the corruption of Cheng Chu alone.
Looking at Column Four of Table I again, we note that most members of the Li Hsun faction were conforming politicians in the T'ang dynasty in the respect that they received a Confucian education and entered political life through the literary examinations. When the faction members were executed after their fiasco in late 835, the military governor of Chao-i, Liu Ts'ung-chien, provided the sole defence of their innocence. Liu Ts'ung-chien argued that the Li Hsun faction members had been Confucian statesmen and acted only in the interests of the state. The extant writings of the faction members are scanty and therefore not helpful in determining the Confucian orientation of the Li Hsun faction. We can find only a small prose work by Lo Li-yen which indicates his Confucian attitudes in government. In this work he elaborates on the Confucian theory of government by moral suasion.

Let us at this point look at the layout of the Li Hsun faction in the court of Ch'ang-an just before the Sweet Dew Incident occurred. The first conspicuous fact to note is that more than half the faction (Li Hsün, Shu Yüan-yü, Wang Yai, Chia Su, Cheng Chu, Kuo Hsing-yü, Han Yüeh and Li Chen-su), either already ranked as third degree officials or had just been promoted to that position (see Table III). This is of great significance since, in the T'ang central bureaucracy, third degree officials were the actual decision-makers, in charge of chief minister's work, and ruling over various ministries and courts. Positions above the third degree were honorific in nature and carried no deliberation powers measurable to those of the third degree officials. Although Wang Yai's honorific ranks would bring him up to a first degree bureaucrat, since he concurrently occupied the position of chief minister,
he would still be functioning as a third degree official. In view of the fact that on the eve of the Sweet Dew Incident, all other important decision-makers had been dismissed from office, the Li Hsün faction represented the dominant faction at the Ch'ang-an court. The sweet dew coup was thus launched when the faction exercised legal authority in the central bureaucracy. This important detail has not been noted by the standard works when they denounced the Li Hsün faction for traitorous behaviour and usurpation of the powers of deliberation.

Formation in Lo-yang

Up to this point, we have been analyzing the composition of the seventeen Li Hsün faction members in the court of Ch'ang-an. We shall next look at the actual formation of the faction. According to the standard works, Li Hsün and Cheng Chu were the key figures of the faction who, upon meeting with the emperor Wen-tsung through the auspices of the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng, immediately recruited officials to embark on their anti-eunuch course for the sole purpose of currying imperial favour. In this interpretation, the alignment is seen to have been formed in an ad hoc and hasty process in Ch'ang-an for one specific purpose only, to gain imperial favour. However, if we examine the key personalities of the faction closely, and trace the circumstances under which they made each other's acquaintance, we find that Cheng Chu was not one of the original founders and that the original alignment was formed in Lo-yang, early in 833, even before Li Hsün met with Cheng Chu, Wang Shou-ch'eng and the emperor Wen-tsung. In the reconstruction below, we shall focus our attention on the activities of Li Hsün, the leader of the faction, and the crucial meetings amongst the four key figures of the faction, Li Hsün, Shu Yüan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su.
Li Hsün, who was originally named Li Chung-yen, was the youngest member of the faction, while Wang Yai was already past seventy when he was executed in 835. The standard works all remark upon Li Hsün's impressive looks and well-built physique, and above all his resourcefulness in devious activities, and his ability to guess other people's mind and intent. After he obtained his literary degree, he served briefly in the T'ai-hsüeh Academy and on the staff of the military governor of Ho-yang. Soon afterwards, his conniving nature was supposed to have manifested itself in the Wu Chao Affair. This was a development of the growing animosities between Li Ch'eng and the uncle of Li Hsiin, Li Feng-chi, who had been a chief minister. In 825, Wu Chao, a Li faction partisan, was informed that Li Feng-chi, of the Niu faction, had antagonistically interfered with Li Ch'eng's attempts to re-employ him. In a fury, Wu Chao threatened to assassinate Li Feng-chi. When the case was brought to trial, Li Hsiin secretly ordered a witness to falsely implicate Li Ch'eng in the murder attempt. The witness refused to lie, and for his criminal behaviour, Li Hsün was stripped of his official privileges (ch'u-ming) and exiled to Hsiang-chou, a desolate place in present day Kwangsi. This was the incident which served to tarnish Li Hsün's public image for life. It also provided ready evidence for the basic "unscrupulous nature" that both his contemporaries in the court of Ch'ang-an and the Sung historiographers tagged onto his name.

Li Hsün was apparently pardoned in 827, following the inauguration of Wen-tsung's reign. From the standard works, we know about his mourning for his mother in 833 in Lo-yang. It is, however, important to account for his activities between 828-832, allowing him one year to get back to Ch'ang-an or Lo-yang after his amnesty. In the absence of
alternative sources which could shed light on the issue, it seems justifiable to accept the non-extant work, K'ai-ch'eng chi-shih's statement, as quoted by the TOTC K'ao-i. It states that when Li Hsün returned from his exile, because of his political disgrace, he could not find employment even on the staff of his uncle Li Feng-chi, who had been responsible for his exile. The standard works all mention Li Hsün's expertise in expounding the commentaries of the Confucian classics, particularly the Book of Ch'ange (I-ching). It was Li Hsün's knowledge of these works that later so immensely impressed the emperor Wen-tsung. It may not be too tenuous for us to suppose that during these listless years of unemployment and political disgrace, Li Hsün might have devoted himself to a serious study of the classics. We are further tempted to speculate whether in fact any Confucian classic, or specifically the Book of Change, had provided Li Hsün with the ideological conception of the role of himself and the faction he was to form and the motivation for the political course the faction later embarked upon. We can find only one reference to the Spring and Autumn Annals which appeared to have inspired both Li Hsün and the emperor. This small piece of evidence is unfortunately inadequate for us to draw a conclusive answer to the question posed above.

From 832-834 Li Hsün apparently settled in Lo-yang to observe the mourning period for his mother. It seems likely that it was during this period that he met the other key personalities of the faction that he was to form and lead. In 832, Shu Yüan-yü was demoted from the Ministry of Punishment in Ch'ang-an to assume the post of redactor "with special duty in Lo-yang" (fen-ssu Tung-tu). The demotion came as a result of his repeated efforts to seek fuller responsibilities and recognition of
his talents and skills. Because of his humble background and the lack of an influential patron in Ch'ang-an, despite his spectacular success in local and metropolitan examinations, it took him eighteen years to acquire the post of auxiliary secretary (sixth degree) while it took others only ten years. From his writings one can indeed observe an extremely self-confident, self-righteous and proud personality, who compared himself to the celebrated commoners elevated to prestigious positions on the basis of special talents alone. From a memorial to the emperor, we note that early in his political life, he was concerned about corrupt practices in the provinces, and considered it his duty to advise and counsel the top whenever he saw fit. It is likely that with this kind of personality, Shu Yüan-yü did not attract many friends at the capital, and thus did not receive much help with his political career. When he met Li Hsün in Lo-yang at his demoted post, their common miserable experience in the Ch'ang-an political arena must have drawn them close to each other. While they were together, they may well have spent much time discussing current political affairs in the context of historical parallels extracted from the Confucian classics which were familiar to both.

While Li Hsün and Shu Yüan-yü were commiserating with each other over their bitter political experience, the other two key figures of the faction, Wang Yai and Chia Su, were serving in Ch'ang-an. The question arises as to when and where the meeting amongst the four would have taken place. It is unlikely that it occurred in Ch'ang-an as implied in the standard works. Gatherings of any social groups in the capital were regarded with intense suspicion by both the emperor and the court eunuchs, not to mention a meeting between respectable officials and a political
exile such as Li Hsun. Evidence points to the meeting as having taken place near Lo-yang in the early part of 833. For Wang Yai and Chia Su to come down to Lo-yang during their vacations or on official duties could not have been a problem, since even for leisurely travellers, the journey from Ch‘ang-an to Lo-yang took only ten days.\(^47\) We also know that Wang Yai went to Lo-yang often, since he had a villa there, with forest groves and running streams surrounding it.\(^48\) To write about the Li Hsun faction immediately after the disaster was a great risk, due to the thorough scrutiny of the triumphant eunuchs. However, a "strange and marvellous" tale (chuan-ch‘i hsiao-shuo), written by Li Mei soon after the disaster, provides evidence that the meeting amongst the four key Li Hsun faction members occurred near Lo-yang, in Shou-an county.\(^49\) Li Mei appears to have been a disciple of Shu Yuan-yü while he was in Lo-yang. In guarded language, Li Mei writes about the ghosts of Li Hsun, Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su renewing their leisurely travels near Lo-yang, not far from the villa of Wang Yai. In the story, each ghost in turn composes poems to express their distress and sorrow for being wrongfully and cruelly butchered upon their defeat in the sweet dew coup.\(^50\) It would seem very likely that in order to disarm political suspicion, under the pretext of leisurely travels, these four men had been planning their political strategy and were already recruiting in Lo-yang. One such recruit was Kuo Hsing-yü, whom we have discussed earlier with the other faction members.\(^51\) Another was Lu Chien-neng, who may have stayed in his family's villa which was close to that of Wang Yai near the Yin River.\(^52\) Lu T'ung, the poet, was another recruit, and his ghost also appears in Li Mei's story. Lu T'ung had been a longtime recluse in Lo-yang, and did not even leave his house for food.\(^53\)
A monk from a nearby monastery brought him rice every day. The fact that on the night before the Sweet Dew Incident, Lu T'ung was staying in Wang Yai's residence in Ch'ang-an can only be accounted for by his active and secret participation in the affair from the very beginning. Tsung-mi, the Buddhist monk and fifth patriarch of the Hua-yen school, also seems to have made his acquaintance with Li Hsün and the other figures at this time, when he paid a visit to Lo-yang in 832-833. Tsung-mi attempted to hide Li Hsün in his monastery after the sweet dew coup failed. When arrested by the eunuchs for this act, Tsung-mi admitted to having been Li Hsün's travelling companion for a long while, and also knowing about his plans beforehand. Surely then, Tsung-mi must have been a travelling companion with the others in Lo-yang when they talked about political issues. In a brilliant reconstruction of the life and times of Po Chü-i, Arthur Waley shows that Po Chü-i was also affiliated with Li Hsün, Chia Su, and particularly Shu Yuan-yü, at about the same time in Lo-yang. Po Chü-i was then the mayor of Lo-yang. Waley states that it is unlikely that Po Chü-i knew anything about the real nature of the meetings of Li Hsün and the others in Lo-yang. It seems apparent, however, Po Chü-i's close friend Shu Yuan-yü would have tried to recruit his support. Po Chü-i, indifferent to politics in general towards the later part of his life, clearly did not wish to get involved. The sudden resignation of the mayorship in Lo-yang may well be accounted for by the reason that he was reluctant to get involved in the consequences of his friends' political course. Lu T'ung, Tsung-mi and Po Chü-i have not been included in our earlier discussions of the Li Hsün faction because they were not at the time politically active in the court of Ch'ang-an,
although they had been connected with the original alignment in one way or another in Lo-yang. While Lu T'ung seems to have been successfully recruited by Li Hsün and the others, and was executed along with the Li Hsün faction in late 835, Tsung-mi and Po Chü-i apparently chose non-involvement and survived the tragedy. The formation of the alignment in Lo-yang may have been so secretive that the facts eluded not only the eunuchs in Ch'ang-an (they did not search Lo-yang for supporters of the Li Hsün faction) but the historiographers as well. For those who knew the facts of the alignment, such as Li Mei and Po Chü-i, it was of extreme importance to refer to them only in guarded language and vague allusions, as shown in Li Mei's "strange and marvellous" tale, and Po Chü-i and Li Shang-yin's few poems on the event.

When we consider these initial meetings amongst the four key figures and their social affiliations with those as Lu T'ung, Tsung-mi and Po Chü-i in Lo-yang during the early part of 833, the question arises as to whether any set of commonly held beliefs drew them together, and the nature of the discussions and plans which could have taken place under the guise of leisurely travels. We can find two common characteristics of this group of men: their anti-eunuch attitudes and their non-alignment in the Niu and Li factional strife. Li Hsün, Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su, prior to the meetings in Lo-yang did not have any illicit dealings with eunuchs, even though it was a normal practice for T'ang bureaucrats at the time to gain special favours. Lu T'ung's anti-eunuch attitudes have been vividly expressed in his poem *Eclipse of the Moon* (Yüeh-shih). Also, Po Chü-i's own strong feelings against eunuchs had been voiced since early in his political career. In the infamous Niu and Li factional strife, the Li Hsün alignment in Lo-yang
and their social affiliations were non-partisan. Although Li Hsün's uncle Li Feng-chi was a member of the Niu faction, it is unlikely that Li Hsün necessarily followed his political inclinations, particularly after his unhappy experience in the Wu Chao Affair. Wang Yai also did not directly participate in the Niu and Li factional strife, even though he was one of the victims of the special examination purge of 808. As for Shu Yüan-yü and Chia Su, they were specifically promoted to chief ministers by the emperor Wen-tsung on the basis of their non-involvement with either faction. Finally, Po Chü-i's non-alignment in the Niu and Li factional strife was deliberately adhered to throughout his political life. Indeed, the political course that the Li Hsün faction later embarked on in the court of Wen-tsung was oriented towards abolishing the power of the court eunuchs and the factional strife of the central bureaucracy.

Up to this point, we have reconstructed the initial meeting of the four key figures of the Li Hsün faction in Lo-yang. The rest of the faction and other partisans were most likely recruited later in Ch'ang-an, during Li Hsün's rise to power. In Chapter Two we observed some reasons why Wen-tsung was friendly to the Li Hsün men. He could well have helped with the recruitment of the other faction members such as Li Hsiao-pen, Li Chen-su and Lu Hung-mao, to whom he was related by blood or by marriage. In the next chapter we shall deal with the phenomenal rise to power of Li Hsün, his transformation of the alignment in Lo-yang to a dominant faction in the central bureaucracy in Ch'ang-an, and the extent of success his administration had with confronting the eunuch problem in the Inner court, and the factional strife in the Outer.
When the Li Hsün alignment met secretly in Lo-yang in 833-834, a dual strategy seems to have been formulated. Wang Yai and Chia Su, both respectable bureaucrats in Ch'ang-an at the time, would work quietly in the central bureaucracy and provide secret support for Li Hsün. They also soon helped to recall Shu Yüan-yü from his demoted post in Lo-yang to Ch'ang-an. Li Hsün, on the other hand, would seek re-entry into Ch'ang-an politics through alternative means. The political maneuvers Li Hsün took were unorthodox, going through the eunuchs and the Han-lin Academy, before establishing himself as chief minister in the central bureaucracy. Through these steps, Li Hsün transformed the original alignment in Lo-yang to a dominant faction in Wen-tsung's court, gained control of the administration, and dealt with two immediate problems that had been perplexing the emperor Wen-tsung: the eunuch menace and factional strife.

In 834, for Li Hsün to enter the political arena of Ch'ang-an through the regular bureaucracy was difficult. Although a Confucian scholar and of an eminent clan, Li Hsün's proscription and subsequent exile for his implication in the Wu Chao Affair in 825 stood in the way. Li Hsün's alternative was to go through informal channels to gain political power. His first political move involved open associations with the notorious physician Cheng Chu and his intimate friend, the court eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng. It was with the objective of meeting Wang Shou-ch'eng that Li Hsün first sought out Cheng Chu, and recruited him into the alignment that was originally formed in Lo-yang. In sharp contrast to Li Hsün's impressive good looks, Cheng Chu is shown by the standard works to be physically repulsive: short, ugly and nearsighted, corresponding to his innate evil nature. His only talents were in the art of medicine, and
in his "magnetic personality". It was by means of these two particular talents that he made his first political appearance in 818, on the staff of the military governor of Hsiang-yang. Immensely despised by both the Inner and Outer courts, Cheng Chu still managed to instantly captivate the interest of one of the most powerful court eunuchs of the time, Wang Shou-ch'eng. He later attracted Wei Yuan-su, another leading eunuch. It was through the relationship with Wang Shou-ch'eng that as early as Mu-tsung's reign (820-824) when he cured the emperor of a disease, Cheng Chu already enjoyed considerable prestige and amassed great wealth from bribery. Although the emperor Wen-tsung first resented Cheng Chu for his illicit contacts with the eunuchs and the officials in his court, he quickly changed his mind when he found Cheng Chu's medical prescriptions to be effective. This happened around 833. The standard works relate of at least three unsuccessful murder attempts on Cheng Chu. The first one was allegedly conceived by the emperor Wen-tsung and Sung Shen-hsi in 831, but it was foiled by Wang Fan, who secretly warned Cheng Chu about it.\(^2\) The second attempt was plotted by the eunuch enemies of Wang Shou-ch'eng, The Shen-ts'e general of the Left, Wei Yuan-su, and the Shu-mi councillors Wang Chien-yen and Yang Ch'eng-ho.\(^3\) It turned out that Wei Yuan-su was so impressed with Cheng Chu that he himself cancelled the murder plans. The third murder attempt was planned by the Li Hsün faction, which had put Cheng Chu on the blacklist as soon as the court eunuchs were slaughtered.\(^4\) This murder plan shows that Cheng Chu was merely used by the Li Hsün faction in the same way that Wang Shou-ch'eng was. Cheng Chu is included in our reconstruction of the Li Hsün faction because he did operate in the central bureaucracy as part of the faction. Cheng Chu was not the original founder, nor a leader of the faction, and
his meeting with Li Hsün took place after the original alignment had convened in Lo-yang.

It was probably early in 834 when Li Hsün went to see Cheng Chu. Cheng Chu was then passing through Lo-yang on his return to Ch'ang-an from Chao-i, where he had been serving as vice military governor. Li Hsün was still in mourning. The standard works record an instant dynamic relationship to have sprung between the two, as if the two were of kindred spirit. Considering Cheng Chu's innate capacity for bribery and unscrupulousness, the situation must have been more business-like and complicated. An arrangement was most likely made at the time, whereby Li Hsün would get an audience with the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng, while Cheng Chu would collect a generous sum as well as gain some degree of social respectability and possibly higher political status by association with a notable scholar of eminent lineage, such as Li Hsün. Due to the risky nature of the political course decided in the meetings in Lo-yang, it is unlikely that Cheng Chu at this point knew about the entire strategy and objectives of the Li Hsün alignment.

After having met with Cheng Chu, Li Hsün did indeed get an introduction to Wang Shou-ch'eng. Wang Shou-ch'eng had been a powerful veteran court eunuch throughout the reigns of Hsien-tsung, Mu-tsung and Ching-tsung. Although he had taken part in the assassination of Hsien-tsung, an act which included him in the "Yuan-ho rebel clique", no one had dared charge him. In 827, as the Shu-mi councillor, he had re-asserted his political influence by directly taking part in Wen-tsung's enthronement. Later, relinquishing his Shu-mi post, he established his military base of power by seizing control of the Shen-ts'e Armies. Wen-tsung could not bear the arbitrary manners of Wang Shou-ch'eng in his court, but
openly he had to appear accommodating towards this veteran of the state (ting-kuo-t'ieh lao). Li Hsun, with a capacity for shrewdness, predicted correctly that through Wang Shou-ch'eng, the least he could obtain was an audience with the emperor.

During the initial meeting with Wen-tsung, Li Hsun struck up one of his perfect first impressions that he had successfully tried on Cheng Chu and Wang Shou-ch'eng. Wen-tsung, an ardent admirer of learning and poetry, was particularly impressed with Li Hsun's thorough knowledge of the Confucian classics. At the time Li Hsun was still in mourning, but in the next few months, he and Cheng Chu were allowed free admission into the emperor's inner quarters. Most likely, it was during this time that Li Hsun, in guarded language and drawing allusions from Liu Fen's examination paper, informed the emperor about the objectives of his group. These were the removal of powerful court eunuchs, the abolition of factionalism, and the revitalization of central authority in face of provincialism and foreign incursions. These were the same issues which had been Wen-tsung's concerns since he came to the throne. It was possibly about this time that Cheng Chu was informed about the aims of the Li Hsun's alignment, and was recruited into it with promises of social prestige and higher political status. Cheng Chu in turn most likely recruited Wang Fan, who had earlier alerted him about the emperor's murder plans against him. Cheng Chu's role at his time seemed to dispel the suspicion of the court eunuchs while Li Hsun was conversing with the emperor. Later, it appears that Li Hsun encouraged Cheng Chu in construction projects in the palaces to keep him occupied.

As soon as Li Hsun terminated his mourning in the seventh month of Tai-ho 8 (874), Wen-tsung, tremendously inspired by his bold speeches,
wished to place him immediately in the Han-lin Academy as a remonstrator official. The chief minister, Li Te-yü, and others protested indignantly over this appointment, on the grounds of Li Hsun's earlier conduct in the Wu Chao Affair. As a result, Li Hsun assumed instead the post of assistant instructor in the Ssu-men Institute. Two months later, nevertheless, Li Hsun succeeded in entering the Han-lin Academy as an expositor/scholar (shih-chiang hsüeh-shih), a junior post in contrast to the more senior appointments, the scholars (hsüeh-shih). Thus, after making contact with the eunuchs, Li Hsun's next tactic was directed towards the Han-lin Academy.

The Han-lin Academy, located close to the emperor's inner palaces, was originally an institute for various disciplines, such as classics, literature, medicine and calligraphy. It turned out to be a staff of scholars well-versed in the classics and well-endowed in literary talent that took charge of the drafting of imperial decrees and edicts. The Han-lin scholars were directly appointed by the emperor, responsible to him alone, and independent of the jurisdiction of the central bureaucracy. The Han-lin scholars and their director (ch'eng-chih) were of any age, from any social or political background and of a political status ranging from a no degree rank to the first degree rank. At any one time, the number of Han-lin scholars serving the emperor varied from two to six. In the Han-lin Academy the scholars held no degrees of rank, but often they carried concurrent posts with degreed status in the central bureaucracy.

In post-rebellion T'ang, the Han-lin Academy, along with the Shu-mi Council controlled by the eunuchs, and other ad hoc organs of power, grew in political significance at the expense of the authority of the
central bureaucracy. The functions of the Han-lin Academy came to include acting as personal counsel to the emperor as well as drafting imperial documents. Frequently while accompanying the emperor as his private secretaries, they were in a position to participate in the deliberation of state affairs. By virtue of this newly acquired status, the Han-lin scholars were considered chief ministers of the Inner court (nei-hsiang). This particular development of the Han-lin Academy drastically reduced the responsibilities of the Secretariat (chung-shu sheng). More seriously, it presented a challenge to the deliberation powers of the regular chief ministers. However, except for a few occasions, the authority of the Han-lin scholars did not surpass that of the chief ministers. The Han-lin Academy instead served as the preparatory ground for the scholars to become chief ministers themselves. The emperor, who had come to regard these scholars as his confidants, usually promoted them directly to chief ministers to execute his orders through the central bureaucracy. We have seen how Sung Shen-hsi was elevated to chief minister by Wen-tsung in 831 to plan for an anti-eunuch strategy. The close connection between the Han-lin Academy and the late T'ang chief ministers is shown by Ts'en Chung-mien's study, which concludes that forty-two percent of the chief ministers serving from 780-888 had been Han-lin scholars, and thirty-two per-cent of the Han-lin scholars of the same period became chief ministers. It was this political potential of the Han-lin Academy that caused it to be used as a base for Li Hsün's political activities.

In the tenth month of T'ai-ho 8, Li Hsün was appointed as Han-lin expositor/scholar. He did not become a scholar, a more senior post, until the seventh month of the next year. Li Hsün's official duties in the Han-lin Academy were to expound the commentaries of the Book of Change,
in which he was an authority. In order to dispel the suspicion of the eunuchs and the officials in his court with regards to the actual role of Li Hsun in the Han-lin Academy, the emperor Wen-tsung frequently made it seem that Li Hsun was employed in only this capacity. Li Hsun's actual intent, however, was to operate from the Han-lin Academy. One of the first things he did in the Han-lin Academy was to change his name from Li Chung-yen to Li Hsun. His motive was thereby to erase the black mark of the Wu Chao Affair that was associated with the name Chung-yen. The next thing he probably did was learn as much as possible about the Han-lin institutions from Wang Yai, a veteran of the Han-lin Academy who had also served as its director. In order to continue to receive support from Cheng Chu and his eunuch connections, Li Hsun also tried to have him admitted to the Han-lin Academy. However, perhaps due to his mediocre background, Cheng Chu did not succeed in obtaining a Han-lin post until the eighth month of the next year (835), barely three months before the launching of the sweet dew plot. It was Li Hsun then who operated alone in the Han-lin Academy for most of the time, backed with the support from the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng and the emperor Wen-tsung.

Very soon after he entered the Han-lin Academy, Li Hsun was able to recruit Ku Shih-i, one of the Han-lin scholars at the time. Li Hsun most likely knew him well from 823, the year in which both obtained their chin-shih degrees. Next, one after the other, two respective directors were forced out, along with two other Han-lin scholars. Even though four Han-lin scholars remained during the period that Li Hsun was in the Academy, they did not seem to have objected to Li Hsun's political maneuvers there.

From the time that he first entered the Han-lin Academy to the time
he became chief minister, the essence of Li Hsun's politics was a simple divide and rule policy. Although he was originally recommended for political advancement by the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng, Li Hsun first applied this strategy to the eunuch problem in the court of Wen-tsung. Until Hsuan-tsung's reign (846-859) when the emperor complained that his eunuchs had "come together in one piece" (ho-wei i-p'ien), the court eunuchs had been divided into several cliques. Policy differences seem to have at one time affected the formation of these eunuch cliques, as in the case of the assassination of Hsien-tsung, when one eunuch clique opposed to the "using arms" policy emerged triumphant over the clique that supported the same. At times there also seems to have existed a polarization between the Shen-ts'e Armies and the Shu-mi Council. In the succession dispute of Wu-tsung in 840, the Shen-ts'e generals who were supporting Wu-tsung triumphed over the Shu-mi councillors who had another candidate in mind. However, at other times, these two eunuch institutions supported each other, as in the enthronement of Wen-tsung in 827. Cliques within the two eunuch institutions could also have possibly occurred. As far as the two Shu-mi councillors are concerned, however, there did not seem to exist animosities between them. Particularly in imperial succession, they seem to have agreed throughout the reigns of the late T'ang emperors. As for the Shen-ts'e generals, there does exist evidence of a struggle between the Left and Right wings. Lü Ssu-mien even suggests that the Li Hsun faction owed its rise to power to the struggle between the two Shen-ts'e Armies, with Wei Yu'an-su as the general of the Left, and Wang Shou-ch'eng as that of the Right. Again in 845, the Shen-ts'e generals were divided. Yu Hung-chih, the general of the Left triumphed over Yang Ch'in-i, the general of the Right, in
the incident in which Wu-tsung sought to recover the seals of the
Shen-ts'e Armies. However, as far as their behaviour in imperial
succession is concerned, the two Shen-ts'e generals were in accord
throughout the reigns of the late T'ang emperors, except in the case of
Mu-tsung's succession. But more obvious and perhaps even more pre­
valent than the above discussions were eunuch alignments based on per­
sonal rivalries for power.

In confronting the eunuch problem, Li Hsun first worked around the
personal rivalry of Wang Shou-ch'eng, to whom he owed his initial rise
to power. Wang Shou-ch'eng was then the Shen-ts'e general of the Right,
director of the Department of Inner Attendance and grand general of the
Mobile Guards of the Right. His contenders for power were the Shen-ts'e
general of the Left, Wei Yüan-su, the Shu-mi councillors, Wang Chien-yen
and Yang Ch'eng-ho, and the general of the Ling Guards of the Right,
Ch'iu Shih-liang. Along with Wang Shou-ch'eng, these eunuchs had all
taken part in the enthronement of Wen-tsung in 827. Li Hsun's tactic
was to first alienate these enemies of Wang Shou-ch'eng, using the
strong backing of this same eunuch. Thus Wei Yüan-su, Yang Ch'eng-ho,
and Wang Chien-yen were sent out of the capital of Ch'ang-an to assume
posts of army supervisors. This occurred in the sixth month of T'ai-ho 9
(835). Two months later, the death sentence was imposed on all three
eunuchs, on the grounds of illicit dealings with the Niu and Li faction
members. Ch'iu Shih-liang was, instead, spared the fate of these eunuchs,
and even given Wei Yüan-su's post, the Shen-ts'e general of the Left.
To appease Wang Shou-ch'eng over Ch'iu Shih-liang's appointment, Li Hsun
influenced the emperor to further confer on Wang Shou-ch'eng high honorific
titles such as the grand inspector general of the Shen-ts'e Armies of
the Left and of the Right, and grand commander of the Twelve Guards. At this time, Wang Shou-ch'eng was so confident of his control over Li Hsün that he was not aware that actual power was being transferred gradually to Ch'iu Shih-liang, in preparation for the final step to eliminate Wang Shou-ch'eng himself. The next eunuch to suffer the death blow of Li Hsün was Ch'en Hung-chih, on the grounds that he had personally assassinated Hsien-tsung. Another powerful eunuch, formerly a Shu-mi councillor, although dead, had his coffin exposed and the corpse desecrated as a warning to his clique. For six other powerful eunuchs who had been earlier banished from the capital, the death sentence was also imposed. The death orders, however, did not reach them until the Li Hsün faction had been defeated. Consequently these eunuchs were spared the fate of Wei Yüan-su and the others.  

While in the the Han-lin Academy, at the same time that he was dividing and eliminating the powerful court eunuchs, Li Hsün also attempted to abolish factionalism in the central bureaucracy by means of the divide and rule policy. Just as he accused the court eunuchs of illicit contacts with the officials of the Outer Court, Li Hsün now attacked the Niu and Li faction leaders for their own bribery with the court eunuchs. In T'ai-ho 8 (834) the Li faction was in control of the administration, while the Niu leaders had at the time been sent out of Ch'ang-an. Li Te-yü and Lu Sui, then chief ministers, were first dealt with by Li Hsün. Li Tsung-min, of the Niu faction, was recalled to the capital and made a chief minister to help Wang Yai, then also chief minister, and Li Hsün to attack the Li faction. During the next half year Li Te-yü was gradually inflicted with a series of disgraces and demotions, until he was finally sent out of the capital on charges of
mismanagement of finance, traitorous behaviour and factionalist activities.\textsuperscript{35} Lu Sui insisted on defending Li Te-yü and within one month, was also sent out of Ch'ang-an to a provincial post.\textsuperscript{36} As soon as the two chief ministers of the Li faction were out of the capital, the Niu faction came under attack. Li Tsung-min, on charges of illicit connections with court favourites and eunuchs, in addition to factionalist activities, ended up with a minor post quite remote from Ch'ang-an.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, by the seventh month of T'ao-ho 9 (835) three chief ministers had been removed from the central bureaucracy by Li Hsun, operating from the Han-lin Academy. Countless partisans and disciples of the faction leaders also suffered demotions and banishment, charged with associations with the Niu and Li factions. By the ninth month of T'ai-ho 9 the atmosphere in the central bureaucracy was so strained and instilled with fear that Li Hsun had to advise the emperor Wen-tsung to issue an edict of reassurance. The edict proclaimed that from the date of issuance, all those partisans and disciples of either faction would no longer be penalized.\textsuperscript{38}

While in the Han-lin Academy, Li Hsun even made efforts to deal with economic problems. In the seventh month of T'ai-ho 9 Li Hsun attempted to deal with the abuses of Buddhist monasteries. Since all those who entered the clergy could evade corvée and taxation, when monasteries multiplied, the state finances would suffer. Li Hsun drafted an edict that forbade ordinations of monks and construction of Buddhist monasteries.\textsuperscript{39} Further, he ordered an examination based on recitations to separate the true Buddhist monks from insincere ones. The monks were allowed three months to prepare for the examination. All those who failed the examination had to be laicized and returned to productive work. All those, however, who were over fifty years old, the crippled
and those with excellent reputations, would be excused from taking the examination. Although this project was put in edict form it was abandoned shortly after Li Hsün became chief minister. It seems likely that at the last minute Li Hsün decided not to intimidate so large an interest as the Buddhist clergy and their supporters, including his Buddhist friend, Tsung-mi. Many eunuchs, especially Ch'iu Shih-liang, were also Buddhists, ready to defend Buddhist interests. It would seem that Li Hsün, not yet ready for a direct confrontation with the eunuchs, did not wish to appear to be launching an all-out attack.  

Up to this time, Li Hsün had been operating from the Han-lin Academy, with only secret support and advice from Wang Yai, Chia Su, and Shu Yüan-yü working in the central bureaucracy. Li Hsün understood from the Wang Shu-wen incident of 805 that he must be able to step beyond the limits of the Han-lin Academy. Wang Shu-wen and his colleague Wang P'ei had also operated from the Han-lin Academy, after obtaining support from a eunuch and an imperial concubine. They did not, however, themselves become part of the central bureaucracy, even though their partisans such as Liu Yü-hsi, Liu Tsung-yüan and Wei Chih-i had posts in the central bureaucracy. When the eunuchs and the upper class bureaucrats united against their administration and stripped their power base in the Han-lin Academy, both Wang Shu-wen and Wang P'ei immediately lost power.  

Li Hsün realized that while the Han-lin Academy was an effective institution of power, it had to be "guaranteed" by the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng. As an informal and personal organ of the emperor, the Han-lin Academy in late T'ang was still part of the Inner Court, in the same way that the eunuch controlled Shu-mî Council was. The only difference was that, whereas the Han-lin had its own administrative offices, the Shu-mî
Li Hsun's intent was to unite with his supporters in the central bureaucracy, and at the same time recruit further support. His final objective was to raise the status of his group from an illegal alignment in Lo-yang to a respectable political body and administration in the central bureaucracy. Only then could he operate without the continued support of Wang Shou-ch'eng.

Li Hsun had prepared for the transformation while he was in the Han-lin Academy. By removing the Niu and Li factionalist leaders from the court of Ch'ang-an, the vacuum in the central bureaucracy was waiting to be filled with members of his own alignment. In the ninth month of T'ai-ho 9 (835), two months after the three chief ministers had been expelled from Ch'ang-an, he obtained chief ministership along with Shu Yüan-yü, whom he had first met in Lo-yang. Li Hsun also remained in the Han-lin and held a concurrent post of vice-president of the Ministry of Rites. Shu Yüan-yü also became vice-president of the Censorate and vice-president of the Ministry of Punishment. Chia Su had become chief minister in the fourth month of T'ai-ho 9, as soon as the Li faction chief ministers, Li Te-yü and Lu Sui, had been demoted. Wang Yai had been chief minister since the seventh month of T'ai-ho 7 (833). The other members of Li Hsun's group also gained promotions during the next two months. By the eve of the Sweet Dew Incident, of Li Hsun's men, four, including himself, were chief ministers, and eight out of the seventeen in his faction were third degree officials, the decision-making rank in the T'ang dynasty. This fact is significant, considering that most other decision-makers had been forced out of Ch'ang-an by Li Hsun's divide and rule tactics. The departments which came under the control of the Li Hsun group included the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Faction Members in Control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Minister's Cabinet</td>
<td>Li Hsun, Shu Yuan-yu, Wang Yai, Chia Su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries in the State Affairs Department</td>
<td>Li Hsun, Shu Yuan-yu, Cheng Chu, Wang Fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Wang Fan, Wang Yai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censorate</td>
<td>Shu Yuan-yu, Cheng Chu, Li Hsiao-pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han-lin Academy</td>
<td>Li Hsun, Cheng Chu, Ku Shih-i</td>
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With the key positions in these departments in the government controlled by Li Hsun's men, we may conclude that the Li Hsun alignment in Lo-yang had, by the eve of the sweet dew coup, been transformed into the dominant faction in the central bureaucracy. At the same time, Li Hsun promoted talented and virtuous men outside of his faction. These included the respectable veteran bureaucrats P'ei Tu, Cheng T'an, and Ling-hu Ch'u, who had previously been placed in honorific positions. P'ei Tu thus became president of the Secretariat, and the other two became vice-presidents of the State Affairs Department. By means of acts like this, the officialdom, in addition to the emperor Wen-tsung, truly believed that Li Hsun would be capable of restoring peace to the empire.

With the administration secured in the hands of his faction, Li Hsun again tried to solve the financial problems of Wen-tsung's reign. This is evident in the proposal to establish a tea monopoly in the Chiang-Huai regions. The suggestion originally came from Cheng Chu, but Wang Yai, as the commissioner of salt and iron, was appointed to implement this state monopoly in tea production. Up to that time, there had been a tax of from ten to fifteen per-cent on tea, which was a flourishing trade in the Chiang-Huai areas. To impose a state monopoly on tea would mean that all production of tea must be confined to plantations.
under state control, and that the common people must transplant their tea shrubs to districts designated as under state supervision. Whether this was a feasible scheme or not is difficult to assess, as it appears that the Li Hsun faction fell from power before the new policy of tea production was fully implemented. Ling-hu Ch’u, who succeeded Wang Yai as commissioner of salt and iron, spoke critically about the proposed scheme. In a memorial, he advocated a return to local control of tea production, and recommended, instead, an increased tax on tea.\(^{49}\) Although both the state monopoly of tea and the attack against the monasteries were not implemented in the end, these two proposals are indicative of the attempts by the Li Hsun faction to deal with the worsening economic conditions of Wen-tsung’s reign.

While he was operating through the Han-lin Academy alone, Li Hsun did not dare confront the powers of Wang Shou-ch'eng directly. Only after he had secured himself and his faction in the central bureaucracy did he feel ready for the final ousting of the eunuch originally responsible for his rise to power. Just twelve days after he became chief minister, with the consent of the emperor Wen-tsung, he succeeded in murdering Wang Shou-ch'eng by poisoned wine.\(^{50}\) Wang Shou-cheng’s brother, the eunuch Wang Shou-chhuan, was also killed soon afterwards. Most likely it was at this time that Wang Shou-ch'eng’s position as the Shen-ts’e general of the Right was given to the eunuch Yu Hung-chih, to balance the power of Ch’iu Shih-liang, who had earlier been elevated to Shen-ts’e general of the Left upon the murder of Wei Yuan-su. As a result of Li Hsun’s divide and rule tactics, at least six leading eunuchs were killed. With the death of Wang Shou-ch'eng also ended the last of the “Yuan-ho rebel clique” that had assassinated Hsien-tsung, and that which
Wen-tsung had wanted to eliminate since the beginning of his reign. We recall that in 831 Sung Shen-hsi was promoted to chief minister for the sole purpose of devising anti-eunuch plots, but for the six months that he was chief minister, not only did he not eliminate one single eunuch, he himself suffered a tragic end. In view of the fact that a year previous Li Hsün had been a political exile, the removal of six leading eunuchs at court must be considered a daring accomplishment. The standard works, in their moralizing tones, overlook the fact that six leading eunuchs had been killed, and lament instead the betrayal of trust that Li Hsün had committed to the one who had been responsible for his political success. Ironically then, the Sung historiographers, who normally held only disdain for the T'ang eunuchs, denounced the Li Hsün faction for their anti-eunuch activities.

Although Wang Shou-ch'eng himself finally perished from the schemings of Li Hsün, two other eunuchs remained to be reckoned with. These were Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yu Hung-ch'iên, who had taken over the responsibilities and powers of Wei Yüan-su and Wang Shou-ch'eng. Li Hsün knew that the Shen-ts'e Armies constituted the bulwark of eunuch strength. When he stripped Wang Shou-ch'eng and Wei Yüan-su of the Shen-ts'e Armies' command, he could only transfer it to other eunuchs. To deal with these two eunuchs who now had control of the Shen-ts'e Armies, Li Hsün realized that the final confrontation had to be a military battle, not a political one. In the next chapter we shall look at the Li Hsün faction's preparations for the sweet dew coup which was launched to deal with the remaining eunuchs in the court of Wen-tsung.
CHAPTER FIVE. THE SWEET DEW INCIDENT IN 835 AND CONCLUSION

The Sweet Dew Incident - Preparation, Execution and Repercussions

It was with the intent of abolishing the final base of eunuch power that the sweet dew coup was conceived and launched by the Li Hsün faction with the active participation of the emperor Wen-tsung. The Li Hsün faction was shrewd enough to realize that military force must be used in the final abolition of eunuch influence in court politics. In anticipation of the event, preparations were made at three levels. In the first place, Lo Li-yen and Li Hsiao-pen, as the deputy mayor of Ch'ang-an and vice-president of the Censorate, were given permission to start mobilizing their reserve forces. Han Yüeh and Li Chen-su were next appointed respectively grand general and general of the Chin-wu Guards of the Left. The Chin-wu Guards were one of the relatively more powerful Southern Armies of the imperial city of Ch'ang-an, in contrast to the Shen-ts'e Armies which were the strongest Northern Armies controlled by the eunuchs. Apart from military preparation in the court of Ch'ang-an, military appointments were set for the nearby provinces. Thus, Wang Fan became the military governor of T'ai-yüan (Ho-tung) and Kuo Hsing-yü became that of Pin-ning (north of the Ch'ang-an area). These two men, on the pretext of getting ready for their departures to the provinces, were urged to recruit on a large scale. Cheng Chu was appointed military governor of Feng-hsiang (northwest of the Ch'ang-an area), in addition to his many other posts. With him, he took five other members of the Li Hsün faction: Ch'ien K'o-fu, Lu Chien-neng, Hsiao Chieh, Lu Hung-mao and Wei Feng, along with five hundred personal troops he had earlier selected. It seems that Cheng Chu was despatched to a province close to Ch'ang-an in order that a base would be retained for
the Li Hsün faction, should the coup in Ch'ang-an fail. In the third level of military preparation, links were made with at least one semi-autonomous province, Chao-i (northeast of the Lo-yang area), with Liu Ts'ung-chien as the military governor. The link with Chao-i was most likely facilitated by Cheng Chu's acquaintance with Liu Ts'ung-chien, under whom he had served two years previously. Apart from military preparations, the Li Hsün faction wished to gain additional advantage by catching the eunuchs unaware in a coup. The plot was to ambush the eunuchs after ushering them all to a single spot, with the false announcement of "sweet dew" used as a decoy.

The coup was launched on the jen-hsü day of the eleventh month of T'ai-ho 9 (December 14, 835) in the imperial palaces of Ch'ang-an (Ta-ming kung). Early that morning, the officialdom and court eunuchs were gathered before the emperor Wen-tsung at the Tzu-ch'en Hall. Han Yieh, the grand general of the Chin-wu Guards of the Left, whose duty it was to report about the events of the night before, announced that sweet dew had fallen in the trees of the Chin-wu barracks of the Left. Li Hsün and Shu Yüan-yü, as chief ministers, advised the emperor to go there personally and inspect it, as sweet dew was an auspicious omen believed to forecast peace in the empire. The emperor, Li Hsün, Shu Yüan-yü and the court eunuchs then headed towards the Han-yüan Hall, near the Chin-wu quarters, while Wang Yai, Chia Su and the rest of the officialdom went about their regular duties. At the Han-yüan Hall, the emperor ordered Li Hsün and Shu Yüan-yü to inspect the sweet dew first. They returned soon, and announced that they could not find any trace of it. Wen-tsung then turned towards Ch'iu Shih-liang, Yü Hung-chih and the other eunuchs, demanding that they examine the trees of the Chin-wu quarters.
Wang Fan and Kuo Hsing-yü, on the pretext of departure for their garrisons in T'ai-yüan and Pin-ning, had prior to this time lined their troops at the Tan-feng gates. After all the eunuchs had gone to inspect the sweet dew, Li Hsün, with the emperor Wen-tsung next to him, called upon Wang Fan and Kuo Hsing-yü to prepare their attack on the eunuchs. However, only Kuo Hsing-yü and the T'ai-yüan troops went forward to receive the imperial orders. Wang Fan was trembling in fear, and the Pin-ning troops did not arrive on time.

At the Chin-wu quarters, Han Yüeh, who had taken the eunuchs there, was perspiring heavily. The eunuchs then became suspicious and slowed down their steps. A breeze happened to set in, and revealed behind the curtains of the Chin-wu quarters an ambush of soldiers. They had apparently been placed there previously by the Li Hsün faction to attack the eunuchs. The eunuchs reacted immediately, and raced out of the Chin-wu grounds to where the emperor Wen-tsung was. Their intent was to abduct the emperor to their side as quickly as possible, such that they could issue orders through him on their own behalf. This was a brilliant tactic on their part, since taking the emperor away would also prevent him from providing further support for Li Hsün.

At the time Li Hsün also had word that the ambush at the Chin-wu quarters had been aborted, and immediately gave signal to the soldiers to defend the emperor from the eunuchs, making sure that he was not abducted by them. The eunuchs, however, managed to seize the imperial chariot and guide it to the Hsüan-cheng Hall, where they declared that Li Hsün and his men had rebelled. Initially the emperor denied to the eunuchs that Li Hsün had rebelled, but after the eunuchs had taken him hostage, he seemed to realize that his role was finally finished and said not a
Meanwhile Li Hsun's men, Lo Li-yen and Li Hsiao-pen, from the Ch'ang-an city reserves and the Censorate, arrived from the east and the west to join the Chin-wu Guards in the slaughter of the eunuchs. They managed to kill only about fifty eunuchs. In the meantime, the Shen-ts'e Armies, under Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih, had been despatched in full force to launch a counter-attack against the Li Hsun forces. They had orders to slaughter anyone in sight, and to raid all the administrative offices of the central bureaucracy. Altogether, over 1,600 men were killed in Ch'ang-an alone. One by one, the Li Hsun faction members were caught through various means. Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai, Chia Su and others were in disguise, but they were seized by the Shen-ts'e soldiers shortly afterwards. As for Wang Fan, he had managed to escape from the imperial city to his heavily barricaded residence. The eunuchs had to trick him into opening his gates, "informing" him about his appointment as chief minister. Li Hsun also escaped from the imperial city, and fled to Chung-nan Mountain (forty miles from Ch'ang-an) where his friend the Buddhist monk Tsung-mi administered a monastery. Tsung-mi wanted to shelter him, but his disciples feared the anger of the eunuchs. As a result, Li Hsun had to leave and was soon caught on his way to Feng-hsiang. Knowing that he would be cruelly tortured and mutilated by the eunuchs, Li Hsun quickly tricked a soldier into cutting off his head.

In the outer city of Ch'ang-an, the search for Li Hsun's supporters continued ruthlessly. There, a large number of people died at the hands of the Shen-ts'e soldiers. The eunuchs knew that Cheng Chu was in Feng-hsiang, where a number of Li Hsun's men were fleeing to. Prosecution orders were immediately dictated by the eunuchs to the emperor and to the
remaining officials to capture these men. Thus, on the way to Feng-hsiang and in Feng-hsiang itself, another thousand men perished, including Cheng Chu, Ch'ien K'o-fu, Lu Chien-neng, Hsiao Chieh, Lu Hung-mao and Wei Feng.

The next day at court audience, with the Li Hsün faction members and thousands of alleged supporters killed or arrested, only a meagre number of officials appeared. The gates of the imperial palaces were heavily barricaded and patrolled by armed soldiers under the command of the triumphant eunuchs. When the gates finally opened, new ministers were appointed to take over the administration of the Li Hsün faction members, but vacancies in the central bureaucracy remained numerous. Ling-hu Ch' u, then the vice-president of the State Affairs Department, had been ordered to draft the confessions of Wang Yai and the other faction members. With these confessions placed in front of him, and with the angry eunuchs hovering around him, the emperor Wen-tsung could only bow his head and consent to everything the eunuchs dictated. On the same day, the Shen-ts'e Armies under Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih led the fettered Li Hsün faction members down to the city markets where they were slaughtered at the waist. Their heads were hung high above the city gates to serve as a warning to future plotters against the eunuchs. The Ch'ang-an populace, not knowing the full story of the coup inside the palaces, watched in curiosity. All those officials who emerged unscathed from the massacres were forced to watch the ruthless executions and mutilations of the Li Hsün men, whose corpses were later arbitrarily strewn around. Clan exterminations of the Li Hsün faction members were carried out on the same day. Only very few men associated with the Li Hsün faction, no matter how remotely, escaped death. Included in the executions was
Lu T'ung the recluse, who had spent the night with Wang Yai just before the launching of the sweet dew coup. Women and slaves found in the residences of the Li Hsün faction members were enslaved by the state.

In the narration of this incident in the standard works, the most striking feature is the incompetent performance of the Li Hsün faction, in contrast to the amazingly quick recovery and co-ordinated counter-attack of the court eunuchs under Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yu Hung-chih. The standard works explain this point by stating that the conception and launching of the sweet dew plot was hasty in nature. According to them, there had been an original plot that had been conceived by Cheng Chu. It was to have all the court eunuchs and the Shen-ts'ē Armies attend the funeral of Wang Shou-ch'eng, near Lan-t'ien (a short distance southeast of Ch'ang-an), and from there launch a full scale attack using Cheng Chu's personal troops. The standard works further indicate that internal strife between Li Hsün and Cheng Chu was responsible for the cancellation of Cheng Chu's plot and its replacement by the sweet dew plot conceived by Li Hsün at the last minute. The coup was then launched five days ahead of the scheduled plot of Cheng Chu. The standard works' account about the struggle between Li Hsün and Cheng Chu for leadership in the faction is, however, full of conflicting evidence. As an example, one notices an arbitrary "assigning" of partisans to either Li Hsün or Cheng Chu, with no explanations or clarifications. One is in particular confused about why Wang Fan, who was recruited and well-treated by Cheng Chu for saving his life, is suddenly put into the Li Hsün line of the struggle, instead of that of Cheng Chu. The relations between Li Hsün and Cheng Chu may be better understood in the context of our earlier reconstruction.
of the original formation of the Li Hsun alignment. We recall that Cheng Chu had been recruited into the alignment only after the meetings amongst Li Hsun, Wang Yai, Chia Su and Shu Yuan-yü in Lo-yang. His role in the faction was only to establish support with the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng and to dispel the suspicions of the other eunuchs. That Li Hsun and Cheng Chu had disagreements is a possibility, in view of the fact that Li Hsiin and the others were interested in solving some problems of Wen-tsung's court, while Cheng Chu only wished to amass wealth and political power. We cannot determine whether internal strife in the faction did occur amongst Li Hsiin, Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su. However, we can safely say that if internal strife did exist, it was not between Li Hsiin and Cheng Chu.

While Cheng Chu may indeed have proposed the plot to ambush the eunuchs at Wang Shou-ch'eng's funeral, it is unlikely that it had been the original plot that was replaced at the last minute. In the first place, the timing of this plot leaves questions unanswered. If it was supposed to have been launched five days later by Cheng Chu, we cannot explain the presence of Cheng Chu in Feng-hsiang at the time of the sweet dew coup. Logically, he should have still been in Ch'ang-an, preparing for the attack at Wang Shou-ch'eng's funeral. Also, the date of the funeral would have been set forty-seven days after Wang Shou-ch'eng's death, an unusual length of time to wait in view of the rapid deterioration of the corpse. Secondly, the plot by Cheng Chu does not seem sound enough to have been considered by the shrewd Li Hsun faction. Wang Shou-ch'eng's death by Li Hsun's order was not concealed at the time. To have a grand funeral for him with all the eunuchs attending would indeed arouse the suspicions of the eunuchs. Furthermore, whether
one could make all the eunuchs and the Shen-ts'e Armies they commanded attend the funeral of Wang Shou-ch'eng, generally despised within eunuch circles, is a doubtful point. Moreover, even if all the eunuchs did show up at the funeral, militarily, it would have been a foolish scheme for the Li Hsün faction to have opened attack against the eunuchs who would have been surrounded by the entire force of the Shen-ts'e Armies. On the basis of these reasons, the original plot by Cheng Chu was most likely overstressed by the Sung historiographers, who wished to explain the failure of the coup by the hasty nature of a replacement plot.

Actually, if we examine the sweet dew coup, we find that it was not a hasty plot. We have already mentioned the three levels of military preparations that were laid before the launching of the coup. In essence the strategy was to combat the military force of the eunuchs by means of alternative military forces, using the Chin-wu Guards, the reserve forces of the Censorate and Ch'ang-an, and the garrison forces of T'ai-yüan and Pin-ning. Li Te-yü, later criticizing Li Hsün's plot as superficial and mediocre, states that he should have attempted to seize control of the Shen-ts'e Armies from within rather than confront them by means of another military force. In 845, in Wu-tsung's reign, Li Te-yü did indeed attempt to curb eunuch powers by ordering that the Shen-ts'e seals, symbol of their authority and power, be returned. The incident was, however, quickly aborted when the Shen-ts'e general Yü Hung-chih threatened the emperor with a general rebellion. Even in 805, Wang Shu-wen knew that in order to uproot the eunuchs' power, their base in the Shen-ts'e Armies must be taken away. When he attempted to do this by putting one of his men, Fan Hsi-ch'ao, in control of them, it turned out to be a dismal failure, with the Shen-ts'e Armies refusing to heed Fan Hsi-ch'ao's
orders. From the experience of Wang Shu-wén, Li Hsün learned that in order to uproot the eunuch base in the Shen-ts'ěe Armies, it must be taken from without, not from within.

Thus, it was not Li Hsün's plot which lacked sophistication, rather, it was that... Li Te-yü did not seriously analyze the problem. Also, the use of sweet dew as the decoy in the coup is not as farcical as it may seem. Sweet dew had actually fallen on the peach trees of the Tzu-ch'ěn palace in the eighth month of T'ai-ho 9, three months before the launching of the sweet dew coup. During that occasion the emperor Wen-tsung had personally examined and tasted the sweet dew on the advice of his ministers. Now, if sweet dew were to be announced again, it would not seem to be an unusual event and therefore would not instantly arouse the suspicions of the eunuchs. The incident was obviously in the minds of the Li Hsün faction members when they conceived the sweet dew plot.

Despite the preparations that went into the sweet dew coup, it backfired almost instantly. We can at this point examine the causes of the coup's failure. Looking at all seventeen members of the Li Hsün faction again, one notices that despite the many military appointments held by them, none were professional military personnel. The lack of professional military leadership is indeed reflected in the performance of the Li Hsün faction during the coup, in which Han Yüeh and Wang Fan were perspiring and trembling even before any real action took place. A specific incident could also account for the immediate failure of the coup. Wang Fan, who had proved himself untrustworthy on two other occasions (warning Cheng Chu about the emperor's murder plans against him, and notifying Wang Shou-ch'êng about the anti-eunuch plans of Sung Shen-hsi), could very well have again leaked information to the other side, to Ch'iu
Shih-liang and Yu Hung-chih. He was apparently promised a chief ministership by those eunuchs, who nevertheless in the end executed him along with the other Li Hsün faction members. From Wang Fan, the eunuchs most likely heard about the crisis that was to descend upon them, and must have accordingly prepared for it. Moreover, they may have at the time perceived and prepared for the opportunity to wipe out, instead, the Li Hsün faction. This then explains the quick recovery and co-ordination of the eunuchs in the events of the sweet dew coup.

However, the disastrous outcome of the sweet dew coup cannot be entirely attributed to the lack of professional military personnel, nor to the possibility of a faction member leaking information. We mentioned that Li Hsün learned many lessons from the experience of Wang Shu-wen in 805. He probably realized that Ch'iu Shih-liang and the other eunuchs also learned their lessons, not only from Wang Shu-wen's incident, but also from Li Hsün's own experience in dealing with the other eunuchs. In the process of eliminating Wang Shou-ch'eng and the other eunuchs, the rise to power of Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yu Hung-chih was an inevitable consequence. The next step planned in Li Hsün's divide and rule strategy, which had hitherto been so effective, was to wait for these remaining two powerful eunuchs to divide into a rivalry of the Shen-ts'e Armies of the Left and of the Right. It seems, however, that Li Hsün sensed instead the two eunuchs forming an alliance with each other, after witnessing the fate of the other court eunuchs. Under these circumstances, there remained no alternative for Li Hsün but to launch the coup as quickly as possible, before Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yu Hung-chih had time to plan their own intrigues. In this respect, the Li Hsün faction was rushed for time in the final launching of their coup against the remaining court eunuchs.
The sweet dew coup had been an act of the dominant faction in the central bureaucracy against all the eunuchs in the T'ang court. With the eunuchs themselves emerging the victors, the revenge they sought did not end with the clan exterminations of the Li Hsün faction members and the massacre of three thousand men allegedly implicated in the coup. The entire officialdom was under attack; their offices were raided and their files thrown everywhere. Although other officials were appointed to take over the administration, real power had shifted radically from the central bureaucracy to the eunuchs. The officialdom, fearing for their own lives, could only bow meekly to the commands of the eunuchs. The chief ministers almost became in effect their secretaries in the days immediately after the coup.

In Ch'ang-an itself, the city was in tremendous disorder. Soldiers plundered rampantly, and imperial edicts had to be issued to stop the terrorizing acts. The populace of Ch'ang-an, not quite knowing the details of the chaos in the imperial city, took advantage of the general unrest to seek private revenge and to intensify their own vendettas. It was due to the dedicated efforts of Ling-hu Ch'u, Cheng T'an, and Li Shih that order was gradually restored. Both Cheng T'an and Li Shih were promoted to chief ministers immediately after the disastrous coup, but Ling-hu Ch'u, who did not satisfy the eunuchs with his reports on the sins of Wang Yai and the other plotters, was never appointed chief minister. The immediate function of these three officials was to restore the functioning order of the offices of the Chancellery (men-hsia sheng) and the Secretariat, which had been destroyed by the eunuchs' senseless campaign for revenge. Next, they advised the drafting of an edict which proclaimed the end of prosecutions of people connected with the Li Hsün
faction. To calm the terrorized populace, Ling-hu Ch'u also memorialized to have the rotting and pungent-smelling bodies of the Li Hsün faction members buried. Although this was four months after the launching of the sweet dew coup, the eunuch Ch'iu Shih-liang still ordered the corpses to be dug up again, and the bones to be thrown in the river. The three officials also had to revoke everything that the Li Hsün faction had done or were attempting to do. Included in this project was the revocation of the state monopoly on tea in Chiang-Huai, and the cancellation of the palace construction projects of Cheng Chu.

Despite the situation where chaos and arbitrary acts ruled, Ling-hu Ch'u, Cheng T'an and Li Shih were able to carry out their restoration work and regain some authority as a result of two later developments in the court of Ch'ang-an. The first one was the subsequent division of eunuch power between the Shen-ts'e generals and the Shu-mi councillors. After the immediate terror of the coup was over, the Shu-mi councillors Liu Hung-i and Hsieh Chi-ling seemed to sympathize with the emperor Wen-tsung and proved friendly to the central bureaucracy, while Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih, the Shen-ts'e generals, continued to show animosity towards both. The second development was the role Liu Ts'ung-chien, the military governor of Chao-i, played in the immediate months after the defeat of the Li Hsün faction. We recall that the Li Hsün faction, in preparation for the military coup against the eunuchs, had established certain links with Liu Ts'ung-chien. In the final event, however, none of the Li Hsün faction members managed to reach Chao-i, although a few family members succeeded in doing so. Because of the strength of this semi-autonomous province, the eunuchs did not dare march into Chao-i to eradicate the remnants of the Li Hsün faction. Liu Ts'ung-chien openly
defied the power of the court eunuchs in Ch'ang-an, and challenged the arbitrary manners with which they dealt with the Li Hsün faction members. In three memorials to the central government he claimed that Li Hsün and the other faction members were merely attempting to kill the menacing eunuchs and did not deserve the cruel executions they were administered after their failure. In one memorial he even threatened that if the eunuchs were more arbitrary in their exercise of power, he would not hesitate to march into Ch'ang-an with his army:

[Wang] Yai and the others were Confucians, administrating the state with merit and imperial favour. They all wished to protect themselves and keep together their clans. How could they have wished to commit treason? [Li] Hsün and the others actually wished to eliminate the court eunuchs and the two Shen-ts'e generals, and accordingly set up the risky plot to kill them all. Thus it came about that [Li Hsün's men and the eunuchs] were slaughtering each other, and [Li Hsün's men turned out] to be accused of rebelliousness. I truly fear that [Li Hsün and the others] were not guilty of treason. Even if these chief ministers [Li Hsün, Shu Yuan-yü, Wang Yai and Chia Su] had actual ulterior motives, then they should be given proper trials, and accordingly meted out punishment. How could there be a situation in which the eunuchs took control of arms and troops to arbitrarily kill and plunder, implicating the entire officialdom, massacring and injuring arbitrarily, causing blood to flow through a thousand gates, and corpses to be counted in tens of thousands, searching and prying through every branch and vine, and terrorizing and suspecting both the Inner and Outer courts? I would like to go to the court of Ch'ang-an, and personally set apart the innocent and the guilty. I fear, however, that there would only be more massacres and the matter would not be resolved. I shall [instead] be sure to diligently govern and rule over your tributary states, and train my troops, such that on the inside I am your trusted confidant, and on the outside I am your state representative. If the eunuchs are still difficult to control, I swear that I shall to my death eliminate those [eunuchs] who hover around you!

Liu Ts'ung-chien was the only person who dared appeal openly on behalf of the Li Hsün faction. By doing so, he acted as a deterrent to the arbitrary manners of the eunuchs, and functioning as an indirect support to the administration of the reconstruction ministers and the
emperor Wen-tsung. It was his presence in Ch'ang-an politics and the support of the two eunuch Shu-mi councillors, Liu Hung-i and Hsüeh Chi-ling, which together helped Wen-tsung retain his throne, despite his active role in the sweet dew coup. However, seen from another perspective, Liu Ts'ung-chien's defiance and challenge in the court of Ch'ang-an signified the worsening central and provincial balance of power in the T'ang government. The coup in Ch'ang-an court had served to weaken the central bureaucracy, shifting its powers to the court eunuchs. But in effect, the coup had caused the court of Ch'ang-an to further lose credibility in the eyes of the provinces, especially the semi-autonomous ones such as Chao-i and the Ho-pei provinces. Thus, ironically, Liu Ts'ung-chien's behaviour indicates an open challenge by a province of the authority of the court of Ch'ang-an, even though it was due to him that the chief ministers managed to regain some of their deliberation powers from the court eunuchs. The province of Chao-i did not meet its fate until the reign of Wu-tsung in 844, under the administration of Li Te-yü. Combined central and provincial forces were sent into Chao-i after the death of Liu Ts'ung-chien to re-assert central authority. The campaign concluded with the ruthless and thorough slaughter of the Liu family members. Li Te-yü, who suffered demotions and exiles during Li Hsün's rise to power, sought revenge against the Li Hsün faction members who had sought refuge in Chao-i in late 835. Thus, included in the slaughters were Li Hsün's brother, Wang Yai's grandson, and the sons of Chia Su, Wang Fan, Kuo Hsing-yü and Han Yüeh.

The aftermath of the sweet dew coup on the emperor Wen-tsung was dramatic. The eunuchs knew from his performance in the incident (by directly sending the eunuchs to Li Hsün's ambush, and afterwards denying
that Li Hsün rebelled) that he had played a substantial role in the initial planning and launching of the coup against them. Having been abducted by the eunuchs in the coup, Wen-tsung could not but assume a submissive posture from then on. A source indicates that he was nearly dethroned by the eunuchs. Under the orders of the triumphant eunuchs, Wen-tsung dictated the death sentences for the entire Li Hsün faction and also the prosecution notices for those who had fled to Feng-hsiang. The apologetic and submissive tone of Wen-tsung is evident throughout these edicts in which he denounced the Li Hsün faction of conspiring against the throne, and admitted that he indeed had wrongfully trusted these men. A month after the sweet dew coup, Wen-tsung changed his reign title to K'ai-ch'eng, to signify that there had indeed been a change in his reign. The tone of the imperial notice regarding this matter is just as apologetic as the above edicts. The participation with the Li Hsün faction constituted Wen-tsung's third attempt to curb eunuch power, after the cautious and exploratory move in the Liu Fen Examination Event in 828, and after the rather bold and reckless Sung Shen-hsi Affair in 831. After the failure of the sweet dew coup, Wen-tsung retreated permanently from active politics. Although he still complained about being controlled by the eunuchs, he no longer demonstrated any vigour to protest. He even knew that his son had died an unnatural death, presumably at the hands of the eunuchs, but dared not question them about it. He became depressed and often absent-minded. Frequently he thought of and praised Li Hsün and his remarkable talents to his chief ministers. In a poem he expressed his grief at not being able to convey his feelings and emotions to his subjects, in the same way that he used to when Li Hsün was closeby. In contrast to the thriftiness with which he first
opened his reign in 827, after the sweet dew fiasco he indulged himself in the usual extravagances of the imperial palaces: concubines, musicians, exotic goods, expensive games and drunken feasts. He even took as concubines the daughters of Li Hsiao-pen, an imperial relative and a Li Hsün faction member who also suffered a cruel death. Towards the end of his reign he was especially concerned about his record in history, and persisted in prying into them. In general, the last five years of his reign after the sweet dew coup were spent quietly. He was succeeded by his brother Wu-tsung, the chosen candidate of the Shen-ts'e generals, Ch'iü Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih.

When the sweet dew coup was aborted in the midst of chaos and terror, the details of the incident were most likely unknown even in the city of Ch'ang-an. All over the empire, however, people knew that there had been a bloody coup in the capital, in which chief ministers and thousands of men were massacred. In 838, the Japanese monk Ennin was in Yang-chou (Huai-nan) where even he heard about the bloody coup. Of course, he made gross mistakes on the date and numbers in the distorted account in his diary. As for the few survivors of the incident, none dared refer to it even though they may well have known the facts and details of the Li Hsün faction and the coup. The Buddhist monk Tsung-mi was spared from the arbitrary massacres most likely because of his Buddhist faith, to which most eunuchs attached themselves. However, afterwards he kept himself distant from any sort of political activities and died quietly a few years later. Po Chü-i had also been in Lo-yang when the Li Hsün alignment was formed, and surely knew about the details of the incident even though he had chosen non-involvement. In two poems, however, he expressed grief for the sweet dew victims, especially for
his dear friend Shu Yuan-yü. Under the arbitrary power of the eunuchs, he dared to write only in guarded language with vague allusions. Another poet who expressed sorrow and lament for Li Hsün and the others was Li Shang-yin, stressing at the same time his relief that Wen-tsung had not been dethroned. How much Li Shang-yin was involved with the members of the Li Hsün faction we do not know. A source indicates that in a report to a provincial official later that year Li Sheng-yin states that the accusations against Li Hsün, Wang Yai and the others were not substantiated by evidence. This was a daring statement to make, considering the fact that the eunuchs were still sensitive about the incident. In Chapter Three we mentioned Li Mei's "strange and marvellous" tale of the reunion of the ghosts of Li Hsün and the others in Lo-yang. From the story, it seems clear that Li Mei, a disciple of Shu Yuan-yü, knew about the details of the coup but only dared to refer to it through guarded language, using supernatural elements. The contents of the tale reveals poignantly his deep sense of loss when the victims died so unjustly. Po Chü-i, Li Shang-yin and Li Mei, in expressing deep sympathy and grief for the victims in written works, represented only a tiny minority in the empire at that time. Public sympathy for the Li Hsün faction members was not evident until 901, in the "act of grace" accompanying the change of reign title of Chao-tsung (888-903). In this document, which absolved completely the guilt and blame of the seventeen Li Hsün faction members, it is stated that they had operated under imperial command and did not commit treason.

These sympathetic feelings have not been shared by the historiographers of the standard works, despite the presence of the 901 "act of grace" document. Rather, the Sung historiographers preferred to consider the
Li Hsun faction members to be unscrupulous men after profit and wealth only. They continued to assess the Li Hsun men from the viewpoint of their final defeat in the sweet dew plot. Ignoring the considerable success that the Li Hsun faction had with its administration prior to the final fiasco, the Sung historiographers, instead, concentrated on the chaos that was left in the city of Ch'ang-an. The emperor Wen-tsung was also criticized for his mediocrity in selecting men, even though his natural tendency to strive for the good of his empire was acknowledged. In spite of these feelings of hostility against the Li Hsun faction members, we note that, like Wang Shu-wen and his faction, the Li Hsun men are not portrayed as traitors to the state and included in the section of traitorous officials (chien-ch'en) as Ts'ui Yin is. Ts'ui Yin, exasperated with the eunuch menace, had towards the end of the T'ang invited the military governor, Chu Wen, to come into the capital to execute a mass slaughter of the court eunuchs. With the final abolition of the eunuchs, also ended the T'ang dynasty that had been tottering since the An-Shih rebellions.
Conclusion

In post-rebellion T'ang, the repercussions of the An-Shih chaos reverberated for one and a half centuries before ushering in a new order, or rather disorder, with the Five Dynasties Period. The Li Hsün faction and the Sweet Dew Incident in 835 constituted a brief but climactic episode in the politics of the late T'ang government that was continuously but helplessly searching for a revitalization of the dynasty. In this study we have shown how the anxiety of the emperor Wen-tsung for a solution to the problems of his empire led him to cooperate with Li Hsün and his alignment, in order to bring about a decisive change in the structure of the central government. Through a study of the composition and formation of the Li Hsiin faction, we find that, rather than a handful of opportunistic upstarts, as the standard works would have us believe, the Li Hsün men were mostly orthodox officials concerned about the affairs of the empire. That Li Hsün, a political exile, could within one year manipulate such informal institutions as the Han-lin Academy and transform his secret alignment in Loyang into the dominant faction in the central bureaucracy in Ch'ang-an is significant. It shows the drastic degree of the disintegration following the An-Shih rebellions of the three-departmental (san-sheng chih-tu) system of the early T'ang government. It is even more significant that in spite of the support of the emperor Wen-tsung in its political ventures, the Li Hsün faction still collapsed in the final coup. This outcome convincingly demonstrates that the T'ang emperor, although symbolically still the ultimate authority, carried little actual power but remained a puppet controlled by the court eunuchs in late T'ang.

In the short period of its rise to power and subsequent administra-
tion in the central bureaucracy, the Li Hsün faction murdered six chief court eunuchs and expelled the Niu and Li factionalist leaders and partisans from Ch'ang-an. This was an amazing feat, in consideration of the fact that the Niu and Li politicians did not even succeed in eliminating one powerful court eunuch during their many respective periods of administration. That the Li Hsün faction had acted in a hostile manner towards the eunuchs, to whom it owed its initial rise to power, warrants additional comment. Modern scholars generally do not see the Li Hsün faction as being independent of outside control. According to Ch'en Yin-k'o, the Li Hsün faction members, similar to all other late T'ang officials, were merely "hangers-on" and "echoing voices" of dissident eunuchs.\(^{52}\) More specifically, Li Ssu-mien interprets the Li Hsün faction to be a mere puppet of the intrigues of the Shen-ts'e Armies of the Left and of the Right, both under eunuch control.\(^{53}\) Likewise, Bischoff considers the Han-lin Academy, through which Li Hsün operated, to be an institution solely controlled by the court eunuchs.\(^{54}\) In his view then, Li Hsün was also directly under the power of the eunuchs. In our study, however, the fact that the Li Hsün faction was able to deal effectively with those eunuchs to whom it owed its advancement shows that the faction was definitely not manipulated by the eunuchs. On the other hand, contrary to the viewpoints of the above three scholars, it indicates that during Li Hsün's rise to power, the same eunuchs were themselves maneuvered.

The manipulation of the eunuchs by the Li Hsün faction was, however, a short-lived affair. The final confrontation with the court eunuchs brought about an abrupt end for the Li Hsün faction members and their supporters. This disastrous outcome of the coup reflects the
division of power between the court eunuchs and the central bureaucracy that was briefly controlled by the Li Hsün faction. It shows that while a few individual eunuchs might be manipulated, when it came to challenging the eunuch military base in the Shen-ts'e Armies, the court eunuchs stood together as one invincible body. In fact, the established power of the eunuchs had already been demonstrated in 805 in the Wang Shu-wen Affair. In anti-eunuch objectives, political methods and unorthodox rise to power, the Wang Shu-wen and the Li Hsiin factions did not differ from each other. While the Li Hsiin faction was initially much more powerful in their administration, its fiasco was also far more dramatic and disastrous than the Wang Shu-wen faction. In spite of the support of the emperors both factions obtained, they failed to curb the power of the eunuchs in the end. In the final analysis, the eunuchs of the T'ang dynasty had by the ninth century, risen to a position that could not be challenged even by emperors. After the coup of 835, the only defence for the Li Hsün faction members came from Liu Ts'ung-chien, the military governor of Chao-i, with whom the Li Hsün faction had made previous connections. Ironically, while Liu Ts'ung-chien's defiance of the political dominance of the eunuchs restored some powers to the central bureaucracy, it also foreshadowed the participation of provincial military governors in the central government. For, the only successful movement to abolish the powers of the court eunuchs was eventually undertaken by Chu Wen, the military governor of Ho-nan. Unfortunately for the imperial household, after slaughtering all the court eunuchs in Ch'ang-an in 903, Chu Wen subsequently usurped the T'ang throne in 907.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1 The rebellions of the An Lu-shan and Shih Ssu-ming families in 755-762 constituted a drastic turning point in T'ang history. For the political, economic and military factors behind the rebellions see E. G. Pulleyblank, The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan, Oxford, 1955.

2 In Chinese history, the concept of a restoration essentially refers to a period of revitalization in a dynasty after it had been afflicted with a tremendous crisis that threatened a collapse of the imperial household. In the T'ang dynasty, the Yüan-ho Restoration in 805-820 was perhaps the only effective restoration movement. By means of expensive campaigns, the T'ang central government managed to restore control over most provinces. After a brilliant reign in the beginning, the last days of the emperor Hsien-tsung were somewhat chaotic. In fact, the emperor was assassinated by a eunuch clique militantly opposed to the policy of "using arms" in his reign. For details of the Yüan-ho Restoration, see amongst other works Lü Ssu-mien, Sui-T'ang Wu-tai shih, Peking, 1959, p. 350-360; C. A. Peterson, "The Restoration Completed: Emperor Hsien-tsung and the Provinces", in A. F. Wright & D. C. Twitchett (ed.), Perspectives on the T'ang, New Haven, 1973, p. 151-192.

That there had been another T'ang restoration movement in the Hui-ch'ang period (840-846) has been polemically argued by T'ang Ch'eng-yeh in Taiwan. Despite voluminous publications, his arguments are not convincing, as his perspectives are impaired by a conscious political motive. See, for example, T'ang Ch'eng-yeh, T'ang-tai hsien-chih yü Hui-ch'ang cheng-feng, Taipei; Li Te-yü yen-chiu, Taipei, 1970. In the latter work he discusses the Li Hsun faction and the Sweet Dew Incident. Without any evidence he concludes that Li Te-yü was basically friendly towards the Li Hsun faction, and expresses surprise that the two did not co-operate! We shall later see how Li Te-yü even slaughtered the last remnants of the Li Hsun family members when he was in power. T'ang Ch'eng-yeh's political stand on behalf of the Taiwan government is evident in his work. He offers a rather favourable re-appraisal of the Li Hsun faction. It would indeed be interesting to see a recent Mainland Chinese view expressed on this issue, which one would expect to interpret the Sweet Dew Incident to be full of revolutionary potential.

3 Ch'en Yin-k'ao, in his hypothesis about the intimate interrelationships of the border tribes and the history of T'ang China, shows convincingly that had the foreign tribes themselves not been disintegrating gradually, the post-rebellion T'ang that was suffering from the devastation of the An-Shih chaos would not have been able to recover some lost territories. See Ch'en Yin-k'ao, "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao" (first published in Chungking 1944), in Ch'en Yin-k'ao hsien-sheng lun-chi, Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo, Taipei, 1971, p. 192-209.

4 In 805, Wang Shu-wen and his faction, which included talented
men such as Tu Tu, Liu Yu-hsi, Liu Tsung-yüan, Wei Chih-i, and Wang P'ei, had come to power through the help of a eunuch and an imperial concubine, with the full support of the emperor Shun-tsung. Wang Shu-wen had served the emperor Shun-tsung since the latter was the heir apparent. Operating from the Han-lin Academy, Wang Shu-wen and Wang P'ei were able to implement certain reforms aimed against the abuses of power by the court eunuchs. After only five months of administration, the Wang faction was expelled from Ch'ang-an through the united efforts of the upper class bureaucrats and the eunuchs. The extant Shun-tsung shih-lu which is attributed to Han Yu and collected in the Han Ch'ang-li chi (wai-chi 6-8) casts the Wang faction as self-enhancing upstarts. This is the traditional interpretation of the Wang Shu-wen movement. The Shun-tsung shih-lu itself has been a controversial topic in recent scholarship. See the debate on its authorship between Pulleyblank and Dull: E. G. Pulleyblank, "The Shun-tsung shih-lu", Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies 19. (1957), p. 336-344; J. L. Dull, "Han Yu: A Problem in T'ang Dynasty Historiography", International Associations of Historians of Asia, Second Biennial Conference Proceedings, Taipei, 1962, p. 71-99. For the translation of the Shun-tsung shih-lu, see B.S. Solomon, The Veritable Record of the T'ang Emperor Shun-tsung, Cambridge, 1955. Modern appraisals of the Wang faction, in the above sources and elsewhere, generally portray the members as true reformers, with ideals and political objectives. The Chinese Communists are in particular interested in emphasizing the revolutionary potential of the faction. See for instance Wang I-sheng, "Lun erh-Wang pa-ssu-ma cheng-chih ko-hsin ti li-shih i-1", Li-shih yen-chiu 3 (1963), p. 105-130. For our purpose in this study, the Li Hsin faction was similar to the Wang group in several respects, including political objectives and the rise to power. We shall be making frequent references to the Wang faction.

5 In the T'ang dynasty, in the reigns of Kao-tsu (618-626) and of Te-tsung (780-800), there has been two recorded cases of the presence of sweet dew. See Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 303, p. 2391; Ou-yang Chan's Kan-lu shu essay on the occasion of sweet dew descending during Te-tsung's reign. In traditional China, sweet dew was an auspicious omen, believed to fall upon the earth only when the empire was at peace. See T. Morchashi, Dai Kan-wa jiten, Tokyo, 1960.

6 For details on the compilation of these three standard works on T'ang history, see Robert des Rotours (trans.), Le Traité des Examens, Paris, 1932, p. 56-85.


8 See Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh 91.

9 According to an article by Lo Hsiang-lin in 1934, a local hist-
torian Hu Hsi (Hsiao-ts'en) of Hsing-ning in Kwangtung had the intention to collect material on the Sweet Dew Incident, in order to reach alternative views of the Li Hsun faction. Unfortunately his work is left only in note form, but Lo Hsiang-lin indicates in the article that he would continue the project. I have not been able to trace any subsequent publications by Lo Hsiang-lin which relate to the event, and, of course, it is impossible to obtain the notes by Hu Hsi. From the article itself, one observes that the notes are important in that Hu Hsi draws from works of literary men such as Li Shang-yin, a contemporary of the sweet dew victims. It seems that Hu Hsi, also author of the Hsing-ning tu-chih k'ao, was a late Ch'ing/early Republican scholar interested in the Sweet Dew Incident because the eunuch Ch'iu Shih-liang, who played such an important role in the event, had come from the Hsing-ning region, the native place of Hu Hsi. See Lo Hsiang-lin, "Hu chi Kan-lu shih-lei ts'ao-kao p'o-wei", Wen-shih hsüeh yen-chiu-suo chi-k' an 3il (1934), p. 1233-1236.


14. The Wen-tsung pen-chi in the HTS (8.3) is only one eighth the length of that of the CTS, and is practically useless in locating sources on the Li Hsün faction and the Sweet Dew Incident.

15. The following chart reflects the typical stages of revision from the most primary accounts to the "standard history" form in the History office:

- standard history (cheng-shih) dealing with a defunct dynasty
- national history (kuo-shih) dealing with the reigning dynasty
- veritable records (shih-lu) dealing with the reign of an emperor
- diaries of activity and repose (ch'i-chü chu) drafted by minor history officials
- daily-records (jih-li)
- records of current government (shih-cheng ch'i) drafted by chief ministers in office


These include the bibliography monograph in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 176; HTS 97), the Chih-chai shu-lu chieh-t'i, Ch'un-chai tu-shu chih, Ch'ung-wen tsung-mu chi-shih, and the Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao (hereafter abbreviated as CCSLCT, CCTSC, CWTMCS, WHTK).

See note 4, this chapter, about the Shun-tsung shih-lu.


See CCSLCT 4; CCTSC 6; CWTMCS 2; HTS 58; WHTK 194.

Wei Mo, descendant of the celebrated political figure Wei Cheng, served both Wen-tsung and Hsüan-tsung. He has biographies in both T'ang-shu (CTS 176; HTS 97). The drafters of the Wen-tsung shih-lu, under the supervision of Wei Mo, were Chiang Chieh (HTS 132), Niu Ts'ung, Wang Feng, Lu Kao, and Lu Tan, who respectively held the posts of vice-president of Imperial Sacrifices, auxiliary secretary of the Bureau of Meals, auxiliary secretary of the Bureau of Honorific Titles, omissioner of the right, and executive secretary of the Chancellery. Niu Ts'ung was the son of the Niu faction leader, Niu Seng-ju. Chiang Chieh is also noted for compiling the works of Li Chiang, a respectable chief minister; the Li Hsiang-kuo lun-chi in seven chapters.


See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/after kuei-hai.

There is an abundance of references to the Li Hsun faction in extant imperial edicts and decrees. These documents exist in the form of appointment notices of the faction members, prosecution orders, and "acts of grace". The documents are most fully collected in Sung Min-ch'iu's T'ang ta chao-ling chi, a work completed in 1070. The documents are also easily found in the Ch'Ban T'ang-wen (CTW), included in the
writings of Wen-tsung, in chapters 72-75.

26 Although Wang Yai, Li Hsün, Cheng Chu and Ku Shih-i had been in the Han-lin Academy, their names were removed from the Han-lin files and texts. See Ts' en Chung-mien, "Han-lin hsüeh-shih pi-chi chu-pu", p. 51-52.

27 The TCTC (Ta-chung 8/10/day unspecified) makes a brief allusion to the absolution of guilt of the faction members except Li Hsün and Cheng Chu in 854. The reliability of the TCTC in this instance is in doubt, as pointed out by Ts' en Chung-mien, in his book T'ung-chien Sui-T'ang chi pi-shih chih-i, p. 307. The two T'ang-shu do not have record of the incident. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that Hsüan-tsung, who frequently complained about the eunuchs having "come together in one piece", would have dared to take such an anti-eunuch stand in his reign. See T'ang yü-lin 2, p. 38-39. When the Li Hsün faction became absolved in the "act of grace" in 901, a statement shows that for over 60 years no one had yet removed the guilt of the Li Hsün faction members. The year of the sweet dew coup was 835, and it is indeed over 60 years when subtracted from 901, the year of the "act of grace". See T'ang ta chao-ling chi 5, p. 31-33. It thus seems justified to accept the version that the Li Hsün faction members had not been absolved of guilt until 901.

28 Mu-tsung shih-lu (for 820-824) dated 831
20 chapters
chief compiler: Lu Sui
The TCTC K'ao-i quotes this work in an instance which has no direct relevance to the Li Hsün faction (TCTC T'ai-ho 5/9/keng-shen).

Ching-tsung shih-lu (for 824-827) dated 843
10 chapters
chief compiler: Ch' en Jang-i
This work is not quoted by the TCTC K'ao-i during the period 827-840. For sources to the above information, see CCSLCT 4; CCTSC 6; CWTMCS 2; HTS 58; WHTK 194.

29 Mu-tsung shih-lu (for 840-846) 30 chapters
chief compiler: Wei Pao-heng
This work seems to have been the last "veritable record" drafted in the T'ang dynasty. By the end of the Five Dynasties Period, we know that only one chapter of this work remained extant. The TCTC K'ao-i quotes from this work often (for example, TCTC K' ai-ch' eng 5/1/1-mao, TCTC K' ai-ch' eng 5/1/kuei-wei, TCTC K' ai-ch' eng 5/1/kuei-yu). The version that was available to the TCTC must have been Sung Min-ch'iü's restored Mu-tsung shih-lu. Sung Min-ch'iü also undertook a project to restore the "veritable records" for the subsequent emperors: Hsüan-tsung, I-tsung, Hsi-tsung, Chao-tsung, and Chao Hsüan-ti. The project was undertaken c. 1070.
As stated above, this work was undertaken in the Sung dynasty. The TCTC also alludes to it in our period, but does not treat the material in it as reliable (TCTC T'ai-ho 9/9/ting-mao). For sources to the above information, see CCSLCT 4; CCTSC 6; CWTMCS 2; HTS 58; WHTK 194.

From what we know about these four "veritable records", they do not seem to be of prime importance to our study. The biographies appended to the Mu-tsung and Ching-tsung shih-lu would not interest us, since the subjects of these biographies did not live to see the Sweet Dew Incident of 835. In the Wen-tsung, Wu-tsung, and Hsüan-tsung shih-lu, we may find the biographies of the contemporaries of Li Hsün who survived the crisis of 835, such as P'ei Tu, Po Chü-i, Ling-hu Ch'u, Li Te-yü, and Ch'iu Shih-liang. But, in their biographies in the two T'ang-shu and in scattered bits of information throughout the relevant periods in the TCTC, we do not find conflicting evidence to the standard accounts of the Li Hsün faction. We can account for this consistency:

1) P'ei Tu and Ling-hu Ch'u both died late in Wen-tsung's reign, thus their biographies would have been included in the Wen-tsung shih-lu, and worked on by the same history officials who composed the biographies of the Li Hsün men.

2) Ch'iu Shih-liang, who died in Wu-tsung's reign, should accordingly have been in the Wu-tsung shih-lu. Po Chü-i and Li Te-yü's biographies ought to be in the Hsüan-tsung shih-lu, since they died during Hsüan-tsung's reign. The shih-lu after the Wen-tsung one were however reconstructed by Sung Min-ch'iu, a contemporary of the compilers of the CTS, HTS, and the TCTC. The sources available to Sung Min-ch'iu would likely have been accessible to the compilers of the standard works. The similarity of sources thus accounts for the general consistency of the records in the standard works on the Li Hsün faction.

The following are examples of additional details in the HTS and TCTC which are not in the CTS:

1) the incident in which Wen-tsung's illness was cured by Cheng Chu (HTS 179.2; TCTC T'ai-ho 7/12/keng-tzu)

2) the incident in which Wang Yai's appointment to chief minister is stated to stem from Cheng Chu's help (HTS 179.2; TCTC T'ai-ho 7/9/ping-yin)

3) The CTS does not record the participation of five additional figures in the Sweet Dew Incident, to make up the number of seventeen in the Li Hsün faction. This number is confirmed by the "act of grace" in 901, and used by both the HTS and the TCTC.

4) The CTS records 1600 victims of the sweet dew coup, while both the HTS and the TCTC bring the total to 3000.

5) The depression of Wen-tsung after the sweet dew coup is not mentioned in the CTS, while both the HTS and the TCTC describe it.
6) The information about the relatives of Wang Yai and Shu Yuan-yü is not found is the GTS, but can be located in both the HTS and the TCTC.

The following are examples of the TCTC's rejection of additional information in preference for the GTS versions, while the HTS accepts uncritically the same material:

1) The chronology of the HTS is unreliable. For example, Li Hsun would not have dared poison the eunuch Wang Shou-ch'eng until he became chief minister. This is the version accepted by both the GTS and the TCTC.

2) The incident of Ts'ui Chen-yu being ordered to dethrone the emperor Wen-tsung by Ch'iu Shih-liang is not recorded in the GTS. The TCTC lists the information as unreliable, while the HTS accepts this information uncritically.

32 It has been elsewhere indicated by means of the TCTC K'ao-i that, for T'ang history up to the end of Wen-tsung's reign (the Wen-tsung shih-lu being the last fully extant T'ang "veritable record" in the Sung dynasty), the GTS is the most faithful in reproducing shih-lu material, as opposed to the HTS and the TCTC. For case studies of certain periods in which the GTS is shown almost copying word by word from the "veritable records", see E.G. Pulleyblank, The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan, 167-171; Liu Yat-wing, "The Shen-ts'e Armies and Palace Commissions in China", p. 437-444. Unfortunately we cannot find a TCTC K'ao-i quote of the Wen-tsung shih-lu with direct reference to the Li Hsun faction, with which we can compare the corresponding version in the GTS.

33 We are applying a simple classification for these non-official sources: the "miscellaneous histories" (tsa-shih) and the "anecdotal material" (hsiao-shuo). The first category includes the works called "separate history" (pieh-shih) and "unconventional histories" (yeh-shih), which were works of historical nature but not drafted under imperial decrees. The second category includes anthologies of anecdotes and tales which frequently dwelled on historical topics.

34 For the course and devastating effects of the Huang Ch'ao Rebellion, see Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih, Peking, 1957, p. 466-521.

35 From the TCTC K'ao-i quotes on the non-extant sources discussed in the Appendix I at the back, we cannot find any favourable comments on the Li Hsun faction. These quotes show that the non-extant sources could have possibly referred to the Li Hsun faction members in the same negative tone as the standard works. Of course there could have existed favourable comments in these non-extant works that were not quoted by the TCTC K'ao-i, which is known not to indicate or quote all its sources.

36 See T'ang ta chao-ling chi 5, p. 31-33.

37 See GTS 169.1; HTS 179.1
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1HTS 179.1; see also similar version in TCTC T'ai-ho 9/7/after hsin-hai.

2Both T'ang-shu devote sections to the Uighur (CTS 195; HTS 217 a-b). Among the various works on T'ang Uighur history, see relevant articles in Lü Ssu-mien, Sui-T'ang Wu-tai shih, and Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih; also see Colin Mackerras, The Uighur Empire (744-840) According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories, Canberra, 1968.


4"From 758 on, every year the Uighur sent in 100,000 horses, and exacted from the state treasury over one million bolts of silk. The exchange was about one horse to forty bolts of silk," HTS 51. See also Ch'en Yin-k'o, "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun Rào", p. 205-209.

5See CTS 195; HTS 217 b.

6The T'u-fan also have monographs in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 196; HTS 216 a-b). Among the various works on the T'u-fan tribes, see relevant articles in Lü Ssu-mien, Sui-T'ang Wu-tai shih, and Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih.

7See Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih, p. 275-282.

8See TCTC T'ai-ho 5/9/keng-shen.


12One of the most intense contemporary critics of the Ho-pei situation
was Tu Mu, who memorialized the throne frequently about this issue. See TCTC T'ai-ho 7/8/ping-yin. The Ho-pe'i region of T'ang China was of crucial significance to the central government. It had a strategic location, and a good climate for agriculture and ideal breeding grounds for horses. Ch'en Yin-k'o and Wang Shou-nan propose that the independent orientation of the Ho-pe'i provinces in late T'ang was a consequence of the differences in culture between the Northeast and the Ch'ang-an area. See Ch'en Yin-k'o, "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao", p. 124-127; Wang Shou-nan, "Lun T'ang-tai Ho-pe'i san-chen chih tu-li ts'ai wen-hua shang ti yuan-yin", Chung-shan hsien-shu wen-hua chi-k'an 1 (1968), p. 569-620. For a detailed study on the T'ang central government and its relationships with the various fan-chen provinces in late T'ang, see Wang Shou-nan, T'ang-tai fan-chen Yü ch'üan-hsi ch'ü yen-chiu, T'aipei, 1969.

13 See TCTC Yuan-ho 10/6/kuei-mao.

14 See TCTC T'ai-ho 1 to T'ai-ho 3 passim. To recruit support, Li T'ang-ch'ien used women and wealth to bribe the Ho-pe'i governors. See TCTC T'ai-ho 1/8/keng-tzu.

15 See TCTC T'ai-ho 2/9/keng-hsu.

16 See TCTC T'ai-ho 4/2/mao.

17 Among others, this was the opinion expressed by the Ch'ing scholar Chao I. See Nien-erh-shih cha-chi 20, p. 262. For a brief survey of the influential eunuchs throughout Chinese history, see C. G. Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs", Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 11 (new series, 1876), p. 143-184.

18 The T'ang eunuchs, most of them being illiterate, neither wrote much nor liked to leave their record in history. What we know about them are from pieces of information filtered through the critical eyes of the moralistic historiographers, who saw them as evil and depraved characters. Primary sources on the T'ang eunuchs consist of biographies in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 184, biographies of 15 eunuchs; HTS 207-208, biographies of 21 eunuchs), biographies in local gazeteers (e.g. biography of Ch'iu Shih-liang in the Hsing-ning hsien-chih), and eunuch epitaphs (e.g. the epitaph of Ch'iu Shih-liang written by Cheng Hsun, in CTW 690). In recent works, Yanō Chigara's studies of T'ang eunuchs and their customs such as the adoption of sons are highly informative. See for example his "Todai kangan kensei kakutoku in yukō", Shigaku zasshi 63:10 (1954), p. 34-48; "Todai ni okeru kashi-sei ni tsuite", Shigaku kenkyū kinen ronshū (1950), p. 231-257. In the West, J.K. Rideout's work on the eunuchs in the early period of the T'ang dynasty remains the most valuable source. See J. K. Rideout, "The Rise of the Eunuchs in the T'ang Dynasty 618-705", Asia Major 1 (new series, 1949-50), p. 53-72; Asia Major 3 (new series, 1952), p. 42-58. Rideout's work has been utilized in dissertations such as that by M.L. Carlson, "The Rationale of

19 T'ang eunuchs were supplied from amongst war prisoners, castrated criminals, captured slaves and from provincial tributes. See J.K. Rideout, "Rise of the T'ang Eunuchs", Part I, p. 54-55.


21 See M.L. Carlson, "The Rationale of Eunuch Power in the Government of T'ang China", p. 60-124, for the crucial role Kao Li-shih played in setting the stage for eunuch involvement in the T'ang political system. Many ad-hoc organs of power, responsible to the emperor alone, were created after the An-Shih rebellions to meet the immediate needs of the situation. Among these were the Shen-ts'e Armies and the Shu-mi Council, both under the control of the T'ang eunuchs.


25 Ibid.

26 In 805 Wang Shu-wen unsuccessfully tried to wrest eunuch control from the Shen-ts'e Armies by putting one of his men, Fan Hsi-ch'ao in control. Li Hsün's attempt precipitated the Sweet Dew Incident. Lastly, Li Te-yü's attempt at directly ordering the return of the Shen-ts'e seals also failed.

27 Eunuchs were put in charge of military storages, such as the chün-ch'i k'u, kung-chien k'u, and the wu-k'ü. See Liu Yat-wing, The Shen-ts'e Armies and Palace Commissions in China", p. 163-166.

28 For example, when the residence of the eunuch Ch'iu Shih-liang was raided in 843 upon his death, a large accumulation of wealth and military weapons were discovered. See HTS 207.8; TCTC Hui-ch'ang 4/6/d.u.

The extent to which commissions of Good Works were able to influence foreign monks is most vividly described in the case of the eunuch Ch'i'u Shih-liang and the Japanese monk Ennin. See E.O. Reischauer (trans.), Ennin's Diary: Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law, Harvard, 1955.

Shu-mi, a technical term like Han-lin and Shen-ts'e, will not be translated in this study. Instead, we shall refer to it as the Shu-mi Council, and to the heads of this organ of power the Shu-mi councillors. The Five Dynasties Period retained this organ, but it was by then no longer staffed by eunuchs.

In this section on the several areas of eunuch power, we should also take into consideration various practices of "self-perpetuation" of these powers. One of these was the practice of adopting sons, which allowed for certain ranks and authorities to be inherited by an adopted son from his adopted father. See Yano Chi-gara, "Todai ni okeru kashi-sei ni tsuite", p. 231-257. Another practice was the cultivation of disciples by direct instruction. For example, in Ch'i'u Shih-liang's lecture to his clique on the skills of strengthening favour with the emperor, he stressed the importance of not allowing the emperor to have free time to indulge himself with Confucian scholars and books. See HTS 217.8; TCTC Hui-ch'ang 3/6/kuei-yu.


Both the original question and reply are preserved in full in CTW 746, p. 9765-9772. Excerpts are found in Liu Fen's biographies in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 190 b. 15; HTS 178) and in TCTC T'ai-ho 2/3/i-mao.

Since we are told that even the other examination candidates admired Liu Fen's paper and considered it the best among their own, we have reason to believe that the paper must have been circulated widely in the capital. Thus not only Wen-tsung, but most of those involved with Ch'ang-an politics must have had access to the examination reply. While not passing Liu Fen, the examiners seemed to have purposely circulated his paper.

Li Hsün was considered to be an expert in the classics. When Wen-tsung alluded to a certain incident which Liu Fen dealt with in his
examination reply, Li Hsun was quick with an ardent response drawn from the paper. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/4/after keng-tzu; T'ang yu-lin 6, p. 226.

40See CTW 746, p. 9765-9772; also see HTS 179.4; Ch'ao Ch'uo was a famed minister in Han times. For an error in quelling a rebellion in 155 B.C., he was cruelly sacrificed by his mentor/emperor. Chang Hua, of the Chin dynasty, rose to political prominence despite his humble background. As chancellor, he was instrumental in formulating a brilliant strategy to attack the Wu. He was talented in learning and outspoken in defence of his principles. Despite his merits, he was also put to death by his emperor. See A. Straughair, Chang Hua—A Statesman-poet of the Western Chin Dynasty, Canberra, 1973, p. 5-6.

41See TCTC T'ai-ho 4/6/after ting-wei to T'ai-ho 5/3/jen-yin passim; also CTS 167.5; HTS 152.5; T'ang ta chao-ling chi 49, p.248.

42See TCTC T'ai-ho 5/2/jen-ch'en.

43The traditional Chinese belief that Heaven was the ultimate judge of human justice is pregnant in the narration of the Sung Shen-hsi Affair. The locusts and epidemics are frequently reported in Sung Shen-hsi biographies and in the Wen-tsung pen-chi (CTS 167.5; HTS 152.5; CTS 17 b.


45The Niu and Li factional strife has been a most controversial topic in both contemporary and modern scholarship. One would expect a summary analysis of different points of view in a recent dissertation by Kwan Lai-hung, "The Factional Struggle of China, 820-850", London, (unpublished Ph. D. thesis 1973). Unfortunately I have not been able to consult this work yet.

46This view is held by Ch'en Yin-k'o and most other scholars of T'ang history. See Ch'en Yin-k'o, T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kac", p. 153-175. This is the point of departure that Ch'en Yin-k'o took in his analysis of the Niu and Li factional strife, which is in essence a continuation of his well-known hypothesis about the polarization of the T'ang ruling class according to geographical and social origins of the two blocs: the old entrenched aristocracy and the newly arisen bureaucracy. He accordingly believes that the Niu and Li factional strife was linked with the struggle of the entrenched aristocracy and the new bureaucrats who emerged through the literary chin-shih examinations.
According to another version of this incident, there was commotion in the Ch'ang-an court due to the scheming activities of an infamous official, P'ei Chün. Wang Yai, one of the crucial members of the Li Hsüan faction, was also involved in this incident, as he was the uncle of Huang-fu Shih, one of the candidates who criticized the government. Along with Niu Seng-ju and the other candidates and the examiners, Wang Yai suffered a demotion. Among other officials who felt the penalties to be unjustified, Po Chu-i memorialized the throne and requested the emperor to reverse the decisions. However, the victims of this examination scandal did not get reinstated until 810. See E. Feifel, Po Chu-i as a Censor: His Memorials Presented to Emperor Hsien-tsung during the Years 808-810, Tokyo, 1961, p. 43-55.

The following table indicates the faction in power during the forty years of the factional feud:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reigns</th>
<th>Faction in Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hsien-tsung (805-820)</td>
<td>Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu-tsung (820-824)</td>
<td>Li, Niu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching-tsung (824-827)</td>
<td>Niu, Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen-tsung (827-840)</td>
<td>Niu, Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu-tsung (840-846)</td>
<td>Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsüan-tsung (846-859)</td>
<td>Niu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the view held by Ts' en Chung-mien and Taiwan scholars such as T'ang Ch'eng-yeh. See Ts' en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih, p. 397-422; also T'ang Ch'eng-yeh, Li Te-yü yen-chiu, Taipei, 1970.

T'ang and Sung opinions on factionalism are based on this traditional concept: that only mediocre men (hsiao-jen) were capable of factionalist activities, and that the superior men (chün-tzu) did not form factions. It was also emphasized that the enlightened emperor should be able to prevent factionalist activities in his reign. In reply to the emperor's question about the presence of factionalism in the court, the officials did not differ in their reply, regardless of the faction that they represented. The reply was, of course, in line with the traditional pejorative concept of factionalism. See, for example, Li Te-yü's essay "P'eng-tang lu" in CTW 709, p. 9223. The historian Ouyang Hsiu, in the midst of intense factional struggles in the Sung government, develops an interesting and radical idea based on the claim that mediocre men were not even capable of forming factions, that is, act consistently as a political group. He considers that superior men alone were capable of behaving as one political body. In this hypothesis, he departs from the trad-
itional pejorative overtones of the term "faction", and puts into it positive connotations. See his essay "P'eng-tang lun" in the anthology Ku-wen kuan-chih, p. 431-433.

52 This view is represented by Ch'en Yin-k'o and other scholars. See his "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao", p. 153-175. Ch'en Yin-k'o maintains that members of the Niu faction represented the newly arisen bureaucrats who emerged from the literary chin-shih examinations, but that members of the Li faction constituted the remaining elements of the old aristocracy, which harboured within itself unequalled social prestige. As pointed out by Ts'en Chung-mien in his Sui-T'ang shih, p. 397-422, it is not difficult to draw out the many exceptions which weaken tremendously the hypothesis.

53 Actually Ch'en Yin-k'o suggests that those who supported the policy of "using arms" became partisan to the Li faction, while those who opposed it formed the Niu faction later on. It seems valid to state that during the Yüan-ho period, the members of the Niu faction did advocate a policy of indulgence, while the Li faction pursued a policy of "using arms". Later in 831, in the Wei-chou Affair with the T'u-fan, Niu Seng-ju again advocated 'indulgence while Li Te-yü was in favour of taking up arms against the T'u-fan. However, in Hsüan-tsung's reign, Po Min-chung, of the Niu faction, pursued a policy of "using arms" against the border tribes. See Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih, p. 408.


55 See Ts'en Chung-mien, Sui-T'ang shih, p. 397-422.

56 To be accused of being factionalist was a serious problem and often warranted prompt dismissals from office or embarrassing demotions. In Wen-tsung's reign we find frequent changeovers of staff caused by punishment meted out to factionalist officials.

57 One example of the intense feelings of a faction member influencing history-writing may be seen in Liu K'o's "Niu-Yang jih-li". A small part of this work is still extant. See E. G. Pulleyblank, "Liu K'o, A Forgotten Rival of Han Yü", Asia Major 17 (new series 1959), p. 156-157. Liu K'o was a partisan of the Li faction, which explains the deliberate slanderous language in the work. In literature, there exists some short stories which aimed at slandering also the leaders of the Niu faction. One example is the "Chou-ch'in hsing-chi" by Wei Ch'uan, in which Niu Seng-ju is accused of disrespect to the emperor and to the empress dowager. See T'ang-jen hsiao-shuo, Hong Kong, 1966, p. 151-156.

58 See TCTC T'ai-ho 1 to K'ai-ch'eng 5 passim.
Ch'en Yin-k'o, in his "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao", p. 168, states that the entire T'ang bureaucracy was polarized, leaving no room at all for the non-aligned in the Niu and Li factional struggle. This theory seems much too rigid, and does not account for a considerable number of non-aligned officials, for example, Sung Shen-hsi, Po Ch'ü-i, Lu Sui, P'ei Tu, and the Li Hsun faction.

For example, Li Te-yü had made contact with the eunuch Yang Ch'in-i. His father Li Chi-fu had earlier supported the "using arms" policy of the eunuch T'u-tu Ch'eng-ts'ui in the Yuan-ho period. As for Li Tsung-min, he had also made contact with the eunuch Yang Ch'eng-ho.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1Appendix I at the back shows that the non-extant source T'ai-ho yeh-shih dealt with seventeen participants in the sweet dew plot. This number is confirmed by the "act of grace" of 901. See T'ang ta chao-ling chi 5, p. 31-33. The CTS 169 contains only nine separate biographies of the participants. The HTS adds three more to the list, one of which is not mentioned by the TOTO. The remaining five participants, which would make up the number seventeen, are located in the biography of Cheng Chu (HTS 179.2).

2Li Hsün has no extant works. See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1; TKCK 19, p.1258.

3Shu Yuan-yü has left sixteen prose works and six poems. See CTS 169.6; HTS 75b/17a; HTS 179.5; TKCK 18, p.1152; CTShih 8:2; CTW 727, p. 9479-9493.

4Wang Yai has left thirteen prose works and twenty-four poems. See CTS 169.3; HTS 72b/19b; HTS 179.3; TKCK 13, p.819; CTShih 6:1; CTW 448, p.5789-5799.

5Chia Su has left sixteen prose works and one poem. See CTS 169.5; HTS 75b/7b; HTS 179.4; TKCK 13, p. 988; CTShih 11:9; CTW 731, p.9541-9553.

6Cheng Chu has no extant works. See CTS 169.2; HTS 179.2.

7Wang Fán has no extant works. See CTS 169.4; HTS 179.6; TKCK 18, p.1142-1143.

8Kuo Hsing-yü has left only one prose work. See CTS 169.7; HTS 179.6; TKCK 27, p. 1758; OTW 729, p. 9521.

9Lo Li-yen has left two prose works and one poem. See CTS 169.8; HTS 179.9; TKCK 15, p. 1013; CTShih 7:9; CTW 692, p. 8998-8999.

10Li Hsiao-pen has no extant works. See CTS 169.9; HTS 179.10; TKCK 27, p. 1758.

11Han Yueh has no extant works. See HTS 179.8.

12Ku Shih-i has no extant works. See HTS 162.3, in the biography of his father Ku Shao-lien; TKCK 19, p. 1257.

13Ch'i'en K'o-fu has left one poem. See CTS 168.8, in the biography of his father Ch'i'en Hui; TKCK 27, p. 1759; CTShih 8:10.
14 Lu Chien-neng has no extant works. See CTS 163.8, in the biography of his brother Lu Chien-tzu; TKCK 27, p. 1759.

15 Hsiao Chieh has no extant works. See CTS 172.3, in the biography of his brother Hsiao Mien; TKCK 18, p. 1179.

16 Li Chen-su has no extant works. See HTS 179.12.

17 Lu Hung-mao has no extant works. See HTS 179.2, in the biography of Cheng Chu.

18 Wei Feng has no extant works. See HTS 179.2, in the biography of Cheng Chu.

19 See Ch'en Yin-k'o's discussion about the political significance of social prestige in T'ang socio-political history, in his "T'ang-t'ai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao", p. 153-159. Ch'en Yin-k'o quotes an example in which consideration for social prestige affected marriages into the imperial family. The chief minister Cheng T'an, in the latter part of Wen-tsung's reign, would rather marry his daughter to the prestigious Ts'ui clansman, a ninth degree official, than to the heir apparent.

20 Although the eighth century historiographer Liu Chih-chi had argued that geography, rather than the place of origin of one's lineage, played a more important role in the moulding of men, the History office in the T'ang continued to identify historical figures by their lineage origins in historical records. See E. G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang", in W. G. Beasley & E. G. Pulleyblank, Historians of China and Japan, p. 147.

21 Li Hsüan descended from the Ku-chuang branch of the Lung-hsi Lis. Li Hsüan's name has not been included in the genealogical treatise of the T'ang chief ministers in the HTS. According to the standard works and the T'ang ta chao-ling chi 49, p. 248, Li Hsüan did in fact become chief minister. The omission must be another of Ou-yang Hsiu's errors in the genealogy project. The T'ang imperial family also claimed descent from the Lung-hsi Lis, although this has been indicated to be erroneous by Ch'en Yin-k'o. See Ch'en Yin-k'o's several articles about this issue in Ch'en Yin-k'o hsien-sheng lun-chi, p. 249-258; 299-304; 342-345. For our purpose in this study, let us just include Li Hsiao-pen and Li Chen-su, related to the imperial family by blood, in the Lung-hsi Lis.

Wang Yai came from the T'ai-yuan Wangs, which altogether produced thirteen T'ang chief ministers (HTS 72b/19b).

Hsiao Chieh, brother of Hsiao Mien, a chief minister, could trace descent from Hsiao Yu, son of the last emperor of the Latter Liang, in the Northern/Southern Dynasties. From this southern aristocratic clan emerged five chief ministers in the T'ang dynasty (HTS 71b/4b).
According to the HTS 75b/7b, Chia Su and Chia 'Tan (chief minister in Te-tsung's court) were the only chief ministers from the Chia clan of Ho-nan. The exact relationship between the two is not known, since neither biography mentions the other. The HTS 179 indicates that after the sweet dew fiasco, the ancestral temple of Chia 'Tan was completely destroyed. One would assume that this act was part of the clan extermination program administered to Chia Su.

Wang Fan's father had also passed the literary examination and appeared to have served in public office. See CTSCKC 56, p. 1010. Lo Li-yen's family did not seem well-known, although his father may have held a public post. See CTSCKC 56, p. 1011. Ku Shih-i's father Ku Shao-lien was a Han-lin scholar and served as president of the Ministry of Civil Office and that of War. See HTS 162.3.

Ch'ien K'o-fu's father Ch'ien Hui was vice-president of the Ministry of Rites and was a Han-lin scholar. He was involved in the examination scandal of 821, in which his integrity showed itself when he refused to make public the "recommendation letters" of Li Shen and the other Li faction members. See CTS 168.3.

Lu Chien-neng came from the famous Fan-yang clan in Ho-pei, which altogether produced 116 chin-shih graduates from 784-875. His father Lu Lun was a notable poet in 766-779. Perhaps because of the small part that he played in the sweet dew coup, his brother Lu Chien-tz'u seemed to have survived the crisis. See CTS 163.8.

Nothing is known about Shu Yuan-yü's family origins. Even the place of birth is not agreed upon by the standard works (CTS, TCTG; Chiang-chou; HTS 179; Wu-chou; HTS 75b/7a; Lu-chiang). It seemed that both he and his brother Shu Yuan-pao excelled in their literary talent and thus emerged into politics in Ch'ang-an. Kuo Hsing-yü's family and place of origin are not known. Han Yüeh's biography indicates that he was well-learned and had administrative skills. There is no record of his passing the literary examinations.

Cheng Chu, Lu Hung-mao, and Wei Feng's family origins were extremely obscure. Wei Feng was a brother-in-law to Cheng Chu, and Lu Hung-mao's wife was the sister of the empress dowager Hsiao.

For a description of the different kinds of examinations in the T'ang dynasty, see Robert des Rotours, Le Traité des Examinus, p. 26-55. In general there were two popular types of examinations which candidates may choose from: the chin-shih, which involved literary talents and thorough knowledge of at least one classic; and the ming-ching, which involved comprehensive knowledge of all the classics. The literary (chin-shih) degree, from mid-T'ang on, was the most popular and orthodox initiation to political careers. The sons and grandsons of important officials could however bypass the examinations and get into politics by means of the yin privilege (hereditary patronage). Apart from passing the literary examinations, a number of the Li Hsun faction, such as Wang Yai and Shu Yuan-yü, also received honours in special examinations designated by the emperor.
Shu Yuan-yü first relied upon the military governor of O-yüeh to obtain political advancement (HTS 179.5). Cheng Chu first impressed the military governor of Hsiang-yang, Li Shuo, with his medical skills (HTS 179.2). Kuo Hsing-yü was hired by the military governor of Ho-yang, Wu Chung-yin (HTS 179.7). Lo Li-yen originally assisted on the staff of the military governor T‘ien Hung-chen (HTS 179.9). Lu Hung-mao, serving in the military governorship of Fu-fang, was in turn patronized by Cheng Chu when the latter became influential (HTS 179.2).

The ranks placed after the various positions are listed according to Robert des Rotours (trans.), Traité des Fonctionnaires et le Traité de l'Armée, Leiden, 1947.

See Sun Kuo-tung, "T'ang-tai chung-yang chung-yao wen-kuan ch'ien-chuan shih-chien yi jen-ch'i ti t'an-t'ao", Hsin-ya shu-yuan hsüeh-shu pien-k'an 16 (1974), p. 329-352. The following table, taken from p. 334 of the above work, indicates the lengths of time it took a regular bureaucrat to advance to various positions in the central bureaucracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From first post to—</th>
<th>T'ang (in general) 827-906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>auxiliary secretary (State Affairs Department)</td>
<td>14.8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretary (State Affairs Department)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretary (Chancellery/Secretariat)</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vice-president (all ministries but Civil Office)</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vice-president (Ministry of Civil Office)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>president of a ministry</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief minister</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first posting dates for our faction members are obtained by noting the year in which each member passed his literary examinations. We then allow two years for the members to find employment in the central bureaucracy or in the provinces. The first posting date would thus be two years after obtaining the literary degree, and the number of years it took to obtain the final position in the central bureaucracy is calculated by subtracting the first posting year from 835, the year all the faction members were killed.

See CTS 169.2; HTS 179.2
30 See CTS 169.3; HTS 179.3.

31 See Chapter Five, p. 86.

32 The standard works show that shortly after the sweet dew fiasco the residences of the Li Hsün faction members were ransacked by both the eunuchs and the Ch'ang-an populace. It is likely that the written works of the Li Hsün faction would be destroyed in this chaos. Li Hsün, known to the standard works as an expert in the Confucian classics, could have written some work, but the Sung bibliographies do not list anything.

33 The title of this work is "Feng-yen ts'ao fu" (Fu on the breeze bending the grass), with a theme that went back to the Lun-yü of Confucius (12:19). See CTW 692, p. 8998-8999.


35 See Chapter Four, p. 67-68.

36 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.

37 This incident is most detailed in the biography of Li Feng-chi, in CTS 167.3.

38 Hsiang-chou was 4989 li from Ch'ang-an. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/8/ ping-shen, Hu San-sheng commentary.

39 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.

40 See TCTC T'ai-ho 8/6/after ping-hsiü.

41 In the section TCTC T'ai-ho 9/3/keng-tzu, the K'ao-i quotes from the Pu kuo-shih, which indicates that Wen-tsung first noticed the audacity of Li Hsün when the latter boldly expounded the Ch'ün-ch'iu in subtle reference to the eunuch menace in court politics. The TCTC K'ao-i does not accept this version, but states that long before this time, Li Hsün had already convinced the emperor regarding his objectives. The quote is significant in showing that Li Hsün, an expert in the classics, may well have drawn upon them for inspiration and motivation. The quote from the Pu kuo-shih reads:"Hsü K'ang-tso presented the newly annotated Ch'ün-ch'iu lieh-kuo ching-chuan in 60 chapters. The emperor asked about the assassinations of Wu-tzu and Yü-chi by the court eunuchs. Hsü K'ang-tso replied that the Ch'ün-ch'iu was too abstruse, and he had not yet studied it exhaustively and dared not expound on its meanings. When the emperor confronted Li Hsün with the same issue, the latter disc-
ussed it most eloquently". A fuller version of this incident is extant in the T'ang yu-lin 6, p.226.


43The references are to Ma Chou and Chang Chia-ch'en, both of whom were commoners raised to eminent echelons of political activity on the basis of talent and reputation alone. See Shu Yuan-yü's "Hsien-wen ch'ueh-hsia" (Presenting an essay to the throne), in CTW 727, p. 9480.

44See CTW 727, p. 9480-9482.

45The standard works, without giving any details, tell us that Li Hsun, Shu Yuan-yü, Kuo Hsing-yü and the others knew each other in Loyang.

46Shu Yuan-yü and Li Hsun's biographies indicate their thorough knowledge of the classics and their erudite backgrounds. See CTS 179.1; HTS 179.1.


48See HTS 179.3.

49This tale is in the collection T Swansea, by Li Mei. The title of the tale is Hsü-sheng. It has been commented upon by the Sung critic Liu K'o-chuang, in Hou-tsun hsien-sheng ta-ch'ien-chi 173, Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an. This story is also collected in the modern work: Wang Meng-chü, T'ang-jen hsiao-shuo yen-chiu, Vol. 1, Taipei, 1971, p. 67. Wang Meng-chü discusses the obscure origins of the author Li Mei, in addition to some remarks about the Sweet Dew Incident, in p. 8-14.

50In the "strange and marvellous tales" (chuan-ch'i) of the T'ang dynasty, the supernatural is often used to record strange incidents, fantasy stories and allegories. Hsü-sheng's contents, when stripped of the supernatural, is allegorical and autobiographical in nature, recording the author's reminiscences of past travels with his mentor, Shu Yuan-yü and the other acquaintances in Lo-yang.

51The standard works indicate Kuo Hsing-yü to have been a close acquaintance to Li Hsun in Lo-yang. See CTS 169.7; HTS 179.6.

52See T'ang yu-lin 4, p. 146.

53See T'ang ts'ai-tzu chuan 5, p. 74: Lu T'ung's three chapters
of poems are extant in the CTSihh 6:7.

54 Tsung-mi was working in a monastery at Chung-nan Mountain, forty miles from Ch'ang-an. For a biographical study of Tsung-mi, see Jan Yün-hua, "Tsung-mi, His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism", Toung-pao 58 (1972), p. 1-55.


56 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.


58 Po Chü-i's resignation as the mayor of Lo-yang is noted in the Wen-tsung pen-chi in the CTS 17 b, on T'ai-ho 7/4/jen-tzu.


60 See Chapter Two, note 61. Chia Su's anti-eunuch sentiment was expressed in the incident in which he dared to yell at a court eunuch. He was punished with a reduction in his salary. See TCTC 9/4/after ping-shen.

61 See CTW 6:7.

62 E. Feifel discusses Po Chü-i's anti-eunuch's memorials in his career as censor during the Yüan-ho period. See E. Feifel, Po Chü-i as a Censor, p. 114-151.

63 See A. Waley, The Life and Times of Po Chü-i, passim.

64 See Chapter Five, note 51.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1 See CTS 169.2, HTS 179.2 for the following biographical information on Cheng Chu.

2 See TCTC T'ai-ho 8/12/after kuei-wel.

3 See TCTC T'ai-ho 7/9/ping-yin.

4 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/mou-ch'en.

5 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.

6 See CTS 184.10; HTS 208b.2. The HTS shows that Wang Shou-ch'eng, along with Ch'en Hung-chih (alias Ch'en Hung-ch'ing) took part in the assassination behind the scenes, but the CTS does not indicate one way or another. It seems justified to agree with Wang Ming-sheng, that the CTS has made another mistake, several of which are apparent in the Wang Shou-ch'eng biography itself. See Shih-ch'i shih shang-ch'ueh 91.

7 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.

8 We have an example in which the emperor asked Li Hsun about an allusion from the Ch'uh-ch'iu that was quoted by Liu Fen's examination reply. See Chapter Three, note 41.

9 Cheng Chu, for the greater part of 834 to 835, seemed to be very much involved with construction projects, which included the digging of ponds in the Chu-chiang, and the construction of palace pavilions. See CTS 169.2; HTS 179.2.

10 See TCTC T'ai-ho 8/8/hsin-mao.

11 This was an institute designed to instruct the sons of officials of the seventh degree and above. The appointment was a low one, at the eighth degree third class.

12 The name Han-lin was not applied until Hsüan-tsung's reign (712-756) although since early T'ang, scholars had been placed in such capacities. The forerunners of the Han-lin Academy were the "eighteen scholars" of T'ai-tsung (626-649) and the Pei-men hsüeh-shih of Kao-tsung (649-683). For the historical development of the Han-lin Academy, see: Tsukiyama Chisaburō, Tōdai sei-ji sei-do no kenkyū, p. 87-111; Chou Tao-chi, Han-T'ang tsai-hsia chih-tu, Taipei, 1964, p. 506-518; F.A. Bischoff, La Forêt des Pinceaux, Paris, 1963. Ts'ên Chung-mien has researched the Han-lin texts more than anyone else. In his work, he has attempted to rectify many errors, including the omissions of certain
names in the Han-lin texts. See amongst other works, Ts' en Chung-mien, "Han-lin hsüeh-shih pi-chi chu-pu", p. 49-223.

13 The central bureaucracy had its own scholars and their institutes. The Chancellery controlled the Hung-wen scholars, and the Secretariat controlled the Chi-hsien scholars. The Hung-wen scholars were responsible for consultations about institutions and rites, and the Chi-hsien scholars were in charge of storage of archives and documents.

14 There seemed to exist various ranks of the Han-lin scholars: the hsüeh-shih, shih-chiang hsüeh-shih, shih-shu hsüeh-shih, shih-tu hsüeh-shih. We are not sure about the relative seniority of these positions in the Han-lin Academy. We do know however that the hsüeh-shih were more senior appointments, while the other titles were junior posts. The ch'eng-chih, director of the Academy, was chosen amongst the hsüeh-shih. In this study, we shall use the term "scholar" to refer to all of the above positions in the Han-lin Academy.

15 The HTS discusses the Han-lin scholars immediately after the section of chief ministers in the monograph of officials (HTS 46).

16 Examples are Lu Chih, Wang Shu-wen, and Li Hsun. Lu Chih, in Te-tsung's reign (780-805), functioned as a chief minister although he was only a Han-lin scholar. Later he protested the current situation and recommended a return of the powers of deliberation to the regular chief ministers. Te-tsung, however, did not listen. See F.A. Bischoff, La Forêt des Pinceaux, p. 10; D.C. Twitchett, "Lu Chih(754-805): Imperial Adviser and Court Official", in A.F. Wright & D.C. Twitchett, Confucian Personalities, p. 84-122.


18 The two T'ang-shu indicate that Li Hsun did in fact become a regular hsüeh-shih scholar, but the TCTC says that Li Hsun remained a Han-lin shih-chiang hsüeh-shih. It seems reasonable to take the T'ang-shu versions, in view of the fact that Li Hsun would not have been so influential had he not become a regular scholar.

19 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1. Li Hsun's excuse at the time was that his name was taboo in respect to his uncle's. It would seem, however, that Li Hsun wished to change the name also to indicate to himself and to the others that an important turn in his life had occurred. Traditionally, one changed one's name to signify a new page in one's life.


21 See CTS 169.2; HTS 179.2. Cheng Chu was appointed only to the position of Han-lin shih-chiang hsüeh-shih, the same post that Li Hsun
It seemed most likely that Ku Shih-i was recruited at this time into Li Hsun's alignment. Ku Shih-i was responsible for drafting some imperial orders, including the death sentences of six eunuchs. Fortunately for these eunuchs, the death orders did not reach them until the Li Hsun faction had been defeated. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/after i-ch'ou. Ku Shih-i himself was later arrested, exiled and executed subsequently. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/12/jen-shen.

Hsü K'ang-tso, the ch'eng-chih, was forced out of the Han-lin on T'ai-ho 9/5/5. His position was then assumed by Li Yü, who also found his way out of the Academy by T'ai-ho 9/8/5. Two other Han-lin scholars were sent out during Li Hsün's residence there. They were Kao Chung (in on T'ai-ho 7/10/12, and out by T'ai-ho 9/8/18) and Yüan Hui (in on T'ai-ho 8/8/9, and out by T'ai-ho 9/9/11. The remaining Han-lin scholars are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Appointment</th>
<th>Date of Dismissal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuei Jung</td>
<td>T'ai-ho 9/8/1</td>
<td>K'ai-ch'eng 1/5/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'en I-hsing</td>
<td>T'ai-ho 7</td>
<td>K'ai-ch'eng 1/5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Kung-ch'ian</td>
<td>T'ai-ho 8/10/15</td>
<td>K'ai-ch'eng 5/3/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ting Chi-hui</td>
<td>T'ai-ho 9/5/3</td>
<td>K'ai-ch'eng 3/11/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Ch'ih</td>
<td>T'ai-ho 9/10/12</td>
<td>K'ai-ch'eng 5/3/16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Wang Ming-sheng called it "Han-lin politics" while Ch'en Yin-k'o prefers it to be called "eunuch politics", even though in essence it was a divide and rule strategy. See Ch'en Yin-k'o, "T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao", p. 181; Shih-ch'i shih shang-ch'üeh 91.

Hsüan-tsung frequently complained to his subjects that the eunuchs in his court had become united in a mass. See T'ang yü-lin 2, p.38-39.

The Shen-ts'e generals of the time, Ch'iu Shih-liang and Yü Hung-chih, who eventually emerged triumphant over the Li Hsün faction, supported the enthronement of Wu-tsung and were successful. The Shu-mi councillors of the time, Liu Hung-i and Hsüeh Chi-ling supported another candidate, and when unsuccessful, met death shortly afterwards. See TCTC Hui-ch'ang 1/3/after chia-hsu. In the enthronement of Wen-tsung, however, both the Shen-ts'e generals and the Shu-mi councillors agreed on the candidate.

This incident is not related in the standard works, but only found in Ennin’s Diary, which the author kept while he was travelling in China as part of the Japanese embassy in the late 830’s and 840’s. This incident is perhaps one example of the eunuchs’ successful attempts to erase their record in historical works. Ennin’s accounts, in spite of certain errors here and there, seem to be quite reliable in the narration of this event in which the Shen-ts’e generals were approached to return their seals, the symbol of their military power. It seems that, according to E.O. Reischauer, quoting from Okada, the eunuchs had lost certain powers since the death of the eunuch Ch’iu Shih-liang. The central government, then controlled by Li Te-yü, most likely decided to strip the eunuch base of power and managed to seek a deal with Yang Ch’in-i, the Shen-ts’e general of the Left, who succeeded Ch’iu Shih-liang. It turned out that although Yang Ch’in-i proved accommodating, the Shen-ts’e general of the Right, Yü Hung-chih would not submit his seals. See E. O. Reischauer, Ennin’s Diary: Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law, p. 360-361.


See TCTC T’ai-ho 9/6/after jen-yin.

See TCTC T’ai-ho 9/11/after i-ch’ou.

See CTG 169.1; HTS 179.1; TCTC T’ai-ho 8/9/jen-hsü.

See TCTC T’ai-ho 9/4/day; unspecified.


See TCTC T’ai-ho 9/7/jen-tzu.

See TCTC T’ai-ho 9/9/kuei-mao.


In a recent article, A.F. Wright suggests that religion played a crucial role in the politics of the Hsüan-wu Gate Incident in 626, in which Li Shih-min (T’ai-tsung, 626-649) usurped the throne from his brother, the heir apparent. See A.F. Wright, T’ang T’ai-tsung and Buddhism", in A.F. Wright & D.C. Twitchett, Perspectives on the T’ang, p. 242-247. In the Sweet Dew Incident, there are scattered pieces of information which have religious overtones. In view of the fact the most eunuchs were Buddhists, the Li Hsun proposals against
the Buddhist faith may outwardly be interpreted as being motivated by anti-eunuch sentiments. However, whether the Li Hsun faction was anti-Buddhist is difficult to determine, due to the lack of sources in this regard. We do know that the Buddhist monk, Tsung-mi, was one of the social affiliations in Loyang when the Li Hsun alignment was formed. From Ennin's Diary, we know that after the defeat of the Li Hsun faction in 835, Taoist lectures for laymen were suspended and were not reinstated until 840, when Wu-tsung succeeded to the throne. See E.O. Reischauer, Ennin's Diary: Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law, p. 299. It is conceivable that the triumphant and vengeful eunuchs in 835 may well have ordered the suspension of Taoist lectures, in order to get even with the anti-Buddhist proposals of the Li Hsun faction. However, as far as the role that religion might have played in the entire Sweet Dew Incident, it remains obscure and undefined.

41 See TCTC Yung-chen 1/5/1-ch'ou.
42 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/9/i-ssu; T'ang ta chao-ling chi 49, p. 248.
44 See T'ang ta chao-ling chi 48, p. 245. The TCTC states that Wang Yai owed his chief ministership to Cheng Chu. This is, however, unlikely, since Wang Yai was already vice-president of the State Affairs Department. His promotion to chief minister may be considered a regular and normal step, without the help of Cheng Chu. See TCTC T'ai-ho 7/7/after jen-yin.
45 See Chapter Three, Table II, p. 45-46.
46 See Chapter Three, Table I, Column 6, p. 40-42.
47 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/10/keng-tzu; CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.
48 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/10/after i-hai.
50 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/10/hain-ssu; CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/ping-wu; CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/after i-ch'ou; CTS 169.2; HTS 179.2.

5 The fact that links were made with Liu Ts'ung-chien is proved by two incidents: the refuge that some Li Hsiin family members received in Chao-i after they had managed to flee there, and the three memorials which Liu Ts'ung-chien sent to Ch'ang-an demanding a repeal of the guilt on the Li Hsiin faction members.

6 The following narration of the events of the coup is basically a paraphrase of the accounts in the three standard works. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/jen-hsü to TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/i-ch'ou; CTS 17 b; CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1. For the exact location of the coup in the Ch'ang-an palaces, see Hiroaka Takeo (ed.), Ch'ang to Rakuyō. Jimbun kagaku kenkyusho Index 8, Kyoto, 1956, Vol. 3, maps 3 and 17.

7 See Chapter One, note 5.

8 Wen-tsung's denial of the accusation that Li Hsün had rebelled is strong in the HTS. The TCTC also has a version of Wen-tsung's initial defense of Li Hsün, but the CTS does not.

9 The HTS indicates that "several tens" of eunuchs died, but the TCTC states that only over ten eunuchs perished. Considering that there were so many of Li Hsün's men preparing for the attack, at least fifty eunuchs must have been killed.

10 At first six to seven hundred men were killed in the various administrative offices in the imperial city, then another thousand perished in Ch'ang-an, outside the imperial palaces.

11 See CTW 72, p. 944; CTW 74, p. 964; CTW 75, p. 976-978; T'ang ta chao-ling chi 123, p. 636; 125, p. 671-672; 127, p. 684.

12 In the T'ang dynasty, court audience with the emperor was preceded by the officials coming in full ceremonial etiquette. The president and vice-presidents of the Censorate usually led the procession of the officials towards the palaces of the emperor. With the officials of the Censorate arrested or killed (Cheng Chu, Shu Yüan-yü, Li Hsiao-pen) and the chief ministers (Li Hsiin, Shu Yüan-yü, Wang Yai, Chia Su) imprisoned or murdered, the ceremonial procession could not take place. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/kuei-hai, Hu San-sheng
Those who perished in the clan exterminations included the brothers of Li Hsün and even the married daughters of Wang Yai. Wang Yai's cousin had come to him for help, gained little in the way of fortune but died along with the Wang Yai family members. Shu Yüan-yü's clan son had obtained immense help from Shu Yüan-yü in the beginning. Before the fiasco of 835, however, he had argued with Shu Yüan-yü and left. Being far away from the capital at the time of the sweet dew coup, Shu Yüan-yü's clan son was spared the fate of the sweet dew victims. These two incidents are related in the standard works and anecdotes with the element of the unpredictability of fortune and misfortune. See TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/after i-ch'ou; HTS 179.3; T'ang yü-lin 6, p. 225-226.

All of Li Hsün's faction members were civilian officials, familiar with politics but not with military tactics. Wang Yai, the most veteran official in the faction, had come up with a plan to deal with the T'ü-fan in 823, but that had not been adopted. Although Han Yüeh had been the protector-general of An-nan, he seemed to have worked only with civilian matters. See HTS 179.8.

According to the HTS and the TCTC, six to seven hundred men were first killed in the various administrative buildings in the imperial city, then another thousand in Ch'ang-an quarters, and another thousand on the way to Feng-hsiang. That then brings the total number of victims to about three thousand. The CTS figures add up to about 1600. We shall use the HTS and the TCTC figures here in this study.

Ibid.
When the emperor Wen-tsung was lamenting the fact that he was enslaved by the court eunuchs after the sweet dew coup, the chief minister Li Shih said that the emperor ought to be relieved nevertheless that even amongst the eunuchs there are those like Liu Hung-i and Hsüeh Chi-ling, who were friendly to Wen-tsung. See TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 1/11/jen-wu. Liu Hung-i and Hsüeh Chi-ling, the Shu-mi councillors after the sweet dew coup, apparently formed a clique between themselves and seemed to support Wen-tsung and the chief ministers, while Yü Hung-chih and Ch'iu Shih-liang, the Shen-ts'e generals continued to show animosity towards both. In the succession of Wu-tsung after Wen-tsung, Liu Hung-i and Hsüeh Chi-ling, who supported a candidate favoured by both the chief ministers and Wen-tsung, met their fate. Shortly after the succession of Wu-tsung, both were executed by the two Shen-ts'e generals. See TCTC Hui-ch'ang 1/3/after chia-hsu.

32 See CTW 733, p. 9579; also TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 1/2/after kuei-wei.

33 CTW 733, p. 9579.


This is the incident about Ch'iü Shih-liang forcing the Han-lin scholar, Ts'ui Chen-yu, to draft an imperial decree on behalf of the empress dowager Hsiao to dethrone Wen-tsung. The incident is related in the non-extant source, P'i-shih chien-wen lu, as quoted by the TCTC K'ao-i. The TCTC, unlike the HTS, does not accept the source as reliable, since Ts'ui Chen-yu at the time was not yet a Han-lin scholar. Although this source is generally dismissed as unreliable, that Wen-tsung was insecure in his throne after his participation in the sweet dew coup must have been quite close to the truth.

36 See this chapter, note 11.


38 See TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 3/10/keng-tzu.
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39 See CTS 169.1; HTS 179.1

40 See CTS 169.1; CTShih 1:15. Wen-tsung was always interested in learning and poetry. He left seven poems after his death.

41 Wei Mo counselled the emperor Wen-tsung against taking into the palaces the daughters of Li Hsiao-pen, since that would constitute an incestuous relationship. Wen-tsung, however, took note of the counsel and released them. See TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 1/7/day unspecified.

42 Wei Mo was the diarist at the time and did not allow Wen-tsung to pry into his records. See TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 4/10/i-mao.

43 After Wu-tsung came to the throne, he administered an extensive purge of the supporters of Wen-tsung, since he was not Wen-tsung's choice of candidate for the throne. The Japanese monk, Ennin, was in Ch'ang-an at the time and heard rumours that Wu-tsung purged four thousand people. As Reischauer says, this was most definitely a gross error in the number of victims. However, that there was terror in the capital at the time was most likely quite true. See E.O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, p. 172-173.

44 In 838, Ennin was in Yang-chou, and noticed a comet. In traditional China, comets were inauspicious phenomena, which signified disaster. The standard works relate of a comet three feet long penetrating from the east at the time that Cheng Chu assumed power. On the subject of comets, Ennin writes about the incident that he had earlier heard about. This was the bloody coup in the capital in which chief ministers and ten thousand people were killed. Ennin's date is wrong by about twenty years, and the number of people who died is also grossly exaggerated. Ennin however admits in the diary that the matter was not clear to him. See E.O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, p. 46.

45 See Jan Yün-hua, "Tsung-mi, His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism", p. 20.


49 See T'ang ta chao-ling chi 5, p. 31-33.

50 Ts'ui Yin's biographies are in CTS 177.1; HTS 223 b.2. For Chu Wen's career and the ensuing chaos in the Five Dynasties Period, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five*
One of the most interesting points that has arisen in this study lies in the observation of the original formation of the Li Hsun alignment in Lo-yang and its subsequent transformation into the dominant faction in the central bureaucracy in Ch'ang-an. In the T'ang dynasty, similar to the Han, there were two capitals: Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang. In view of the economically strategic location of Lo-yang, it would have been the logical choice for the political capital of the T'ang. However, since the important clans which supported the throne resided in Kuan-chung (northwest region), Ch'ang-an instead was the location of the imperial court and the seat of the government. In the first part of the dynasty, nevertheless, Lo-yang, which also had imperial palaces modelled after those in Ch'ang-an, was the "occasional" political capital. Prior to the construction of the canal transport system linking the two capitals in the latter part of Hsüan-tsung's reign (712-756), it had been necessary for the entire T'ang imperial household and government to move to Lo-yang whenever there was drought and crop failures in Kuan-chung. The transfers to Lo-yang were however at times motivated by political concerns rather than economic necessities. The empress Wu (690-705) for most of her reign stayed in Lo-yang, where her support was situated. When Chung-tsung (705-710) moved back to Ch'ang-an, political motives were again apparent, as the support of his empress Wei resided in Kuan-chung. After Hsüan-tsung's reign, Lo-yang never again was the seat of the T'ang government. (See D.C. Twitchett, The Financial Administration Under the T'ang Dynasty, p. 86-87) Lo-yang's political significance was after then diminished to merely being the place of demotions from Ch'ang-an and the place of retirement for former Ch'ang-an bureaucrats. In the Sweet Dew Incident, the only political significance of Lo-yang that we can interpret from our study lies in serving as the place for illegal and dangerous political activities, including the formation of secret alignments. To gain insights into the exact political role of Lo-yang in the dual capital T'ang political system, it would be necessary to undertake a comprehensive study and review of the court intrigues and coups that occurred so frequently throughout the T'ang dynasty.

52 See Chapter One, p. 5-6.

53 Ibid.

54 F.A. Bischoff, La Fôret des Pinceaux, p. 11.
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APPENDIX I. ADDITIONAL NON-OFFICIAL SOURCES OF THE STANDARD WORKS ON THE SWEET DEW INCIDENT

The sources for the information on the following supplementary non-official sources of the standard works are provided by the TCTC K'ao-i and the Sung bibliographies: the bibliography monographs in the two T'ang-shu (CTS 47-48; HTS 57-60), the Chih-chai shu-lu chieh-t'i, the Ch'ün-ch'ài tu-shu chih, the Ch'ung-wen tsung-mu chi-shih, and the Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao.

An asterisk indicates extant works.

A. Miscellaneous Histories (tsa-shih)

1 a. T'ai-ho yeh-shih 太和野史 (Unconventional History of the T'ai-ho, 827-835)

dated late T'ang
3 chapters
author unknown

preface by Yuan T'ao of Ch'en-chün, dated 847
We are informed that this work deals with the seventeen participants of the Sweet Dew Incident. Although both the author and the preface writer are unknown, the early date of the preface suggests the text to have been written shortly after the incident in 835. The TCTC K'ao-i does not quote this work, but the HTS seems to have used it. Of the three standard works, the HTS is the only one that identifies all seventeen members of the faction that launched the coup (HTS 179). The HTS (59) also records a work called T'ai-ho yeh-shih in 10 chapters, and this information seems to have been drawn upon by the Yü-hai (47). In the Yü-hai the authorship is attributed to a recluse in 889, and the work is said to cover the period 827-890. This information is not confirmed in the other bibliographies. This listing in 10 chapters might well have been a mistaken substitution of the work in 3 chapters, or a later expansion of the work to 10 chapters.

1 b. T'ai-ho ts'ui-hsiung chi 太和權變記 (Record of the Destruction of Evil Men in the T'ai-ho)

dated late T'ang
1 chapter
author unknown

The Sung bibliographies agree on the text being identical in many respects to the above work, and conclude that it must have been a draft, or an earlier edition. It must have still existed as a separate work in Sung times, since the TCTC K'ao-i makes reference to it (TCTC T'ai-ho 8/6/after ping-hsü).

2. Kan-lu chi 甘露記 (Record of the Sweet Dew Incident)

dated late T'ang
2 chapters
author unknown

We are told that the first chapter deals with the tragedy of the Sweet Dew Incident, while the second concludes with the backgrounds
of the coup participants. It is significant to note that both this work and the previously mentioned T'ai-ho yeh-shih seemed to contain biographies. This biographical material may well have been drawn upon by the HTS and the TCTC, which had access to these works. On one occasion the HTS incorporates almost the same words in describing the crucial meeting between Li Hsün and Cheng Chu. Compare these two passages:

**HTS** 179.1

The TCTC quotes from this work twice (TCTC T'ai-ho 8/6/aft ping-hsü, quoting from the Kan-lu chi:...)

The title of this work varies slightly among the bibliographies, and we can perhaps ascribe this to the circulation of the work in several copies or editions.

3. **I-mao chi** 輯記 (Record of the Year I-mao, 835)

dated late T'ang

1 chapter

author: Li Ch'iên-yung 李湛用

commentary by Li Shih-che of Wu-chün 吳忠裔, undated

The bibliographies indicate the author, Li Ch'iên-yung, to have been a commoner, who recorded the basic plots of Li Hsun and Cheng Chu. Apart from this, we cannot obtain further information about either the author or the commentator. The TCTC K'ao-i also quotes from this work (TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/mou-ch'en).

4. **K'ai-ch'eng chi-shih** 開成紀事 (Record of the Events of the K'ai-ch'eng, 835-840)

dated late T'ang

3 chapters

author: Yang Shih? 楊時

The TCTC K'ao-i quotes from this work frequently (TCTC T'ai-ho 7/9/ping-yin, TCTC T'ai-ho 9/9/ting-mao, TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/mou-ch'en, TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 1/3/jen-yin, TCTC T'ai-ho 9/12/ting-hai), but does not show any consistency in accepting its versions of events. In the incident quoted in T'ai-ho 9/9/ting-mao, the TCTC K'ao-i accepts the K'ai-ch'eng chi-shih version that Li Ku-yen was not in the faction of Li Tsung-min, but further down in the same passage, it disagrees with the work on a date. Although the period this work deals with was supposedly 836-840, the TCTC K'ao-i references show that it covers also the events of the Sweet Dew Incident in 835.

*5 **Wen-wu liang-ch'ao hsien-t'i chi** 文武兩朝獻策記 (Deliberation Records of the Reigns of Wen-tsung and Wu-tsung, 827-846)

dated 846-848

3 chapters

author: Li Te-yü (787-849) 李德裕

This work records the deliberations of the central government during
Li Te-yü's terms as chief minister to Wen-tsung and Wu-tsung. Li Te-yü was the leader of the Li faction at court, and it was because of his involvement in partisan politics that he went through numerous changes in his political career. Li Te-yü may have written this work during his exile from Ch'ang-an, following the succession of Hsüan-tsung in 846. Hsüan-tsung was friendly to the political rivals of Li Te-yü, Niu Seng-ju and his faction. The TCTC K'ao-i quotes from this work on many occasions, and frequently accepts its version in the elucidation of certain points (TCTC T'ai-ho 7/9/ping-yin, TCTC T'ai-ho 8/6/after ping-hsü). An extract of this work is extant under the same title, in the collection Hsü t'an-chu, in the Shih-wan chüan lou-shu ts'ung-shu 11:1. Four incidents are related in this extract, including the two which deal with the appointment to chief minister of Li Te-yü and Wang Yai. None of the four incidents in the extract relate directly to the Sweet Dew Incident.

B. Anecdotes (hsiao-shuo)

6. Pu kuo-shih 補國史 (Supplement to the National History)

dated 874-888
6 chapters
author: Lin En 林恩

The bibliographies do not have much information about this work. The TCTC K'ao-i quotes from it often, but is not consistent in accepting its accounts. Whenever there are alternative versions of an incident, it dismisses the work as mere anecdotal material. However, in an incident where there are no other sources, it accepts the Pu kuo-shih version (TCTC T'ai-ho 7/1 chia-wu, T'ai-ho 9/4/keng-tzu, TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 3/5/1-hai; TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 3/11/ting-mao). Although this work is no longer extant as an independent work, some sections have been incorporated in the still-extant anecdotal collection: T'ang yü-lin. The T'ang yü-lin is a Sung anecdotal collection of over fifty works. Selections are not listed with their sources, and one must examine the TCTC K'ao-i quotes along with the selections in order to find the original sources. The section of Pu kuo-shih which found its way into the T'ang yü-lin relates to the incident in which Li Hsun expounded the classics to the emperor (T'ang yü-lin 6, p. 226; 3, p. 76).

7. T'ang ch'üeh-shih 唐闕史 (Gaps in T'ang History)

dated late T'ang, or Five Dynasties
3 chapters
author: Kao Yen-hsiu 高彥休

The author is an obscure figure, who called himself Ts'an liao-tzu 史遼子. The TCTC K'ao-i quotes this work twice, in one instance accepting its version, and in another case rejecting it on the basis of its anecdotal nature (TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 4/11/1-hai, TCTC K'ai-ch'eng 5/1/1-mao). An extant extract of the work exists under the title Yü-lan ch'üeh-shih 御覽闕史, collected in the Chih-pu-chu chai ts'ung-shu 1. For further information on the work see Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'ı-yao 27, p. 82. The extant extract does not
contain any direct reference to the Sweet Dew Incident.

8 P'i-shih chien-wen lu (Mr. P'i's Records of Things Seen and Heard)
dated Five Dynasties or early Sung
5 chapters
author: P'i Kuang-yeh

We are told that this work covers the period 877-937, and was written by a minor official in Hang-chou who called himself Lu men-tzu. The TCTC K'ao-i quotes it in an incident about the dethronement of Wen-tsung by Ch'iu Shih-liang that involved the Han-lin scholar Ts'ui Chen-yu (TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/1-ch'ou). This incident is however rejected by the TCTC as unreliable material, since Ts'ui Chen-yu was at that time not yet the Han-lin scholar. The HTS however utilized the same material as fact. This is an incident in which the compiler of the TCTC shows more critical use of available non-official sources. The TCTC K'ao-i quote of the incident is also incorporated in the T'ang yu-lin (T'ang yu-lin 3, p. 76).

*9 Tu-yang tsa-pien (Miscellaneous Compilations of Tu-yang)
dated shortly after 873
3 chapters
author: Su 0

Su 0, a native of Tu-yang, obtained his literary (chin-shih) degree in 886, and became a minor official. This anecdotal anthology, still extant as an independent work, deals with the period 763-873. This work is not quoted by the TCTC K'ao-i but it seems clear that in at least three incidents, the HTS and the TCTC used it to the extent of almost word by word copying. These three incidents are: 1) the depression of Wen-tsung after the Sweet Dew Incident, 2) additional information about Wang Yai's cousin, Wang Mo, who suffered execution along with the Li Hsün faction members, and 3) additional information about Shu Yuan-yü's clan son, Shu Shou-ch'ien, who remained unscathed in the incident. Compare the versions in the HTS 179, TCTC T'ai-ho 9/11/1-ch'ou, K'ai-ch'eng 1/11/ting-ssu, and in the Tu-yang tsa-pien 2, p. 42-44.
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lieh-chuan 列傳
Ling Guards 鎮衛
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Liu Fen 劉曄
Liu Hsi 劉昞
Liu Hung-i 劉弘逸
Liu K'o-chuang 劉克莊
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men-hsia sheng 門下省
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nei-hsiang 内相
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P'ei Chün 裴均
P'ei Tu 裴度
pen-chi 本紀
pi-chao 別史
pieh-shih 別史
ping-pu 兵部
Pin-ning 邻寧
Po Chü-i 白居易
san-sheng chih-tu 三省制度
Shan-nan 山南
shang-shu sheng 尚書省
Shen-ts'e Armies (Shen-ts'e generals) 神策軍 神策中尉
Shen-wu Armies 神武軍
shih-cheng chi 特政記
shih-lu 實錄
shih-tsu 士族
Shou-an County 塞安縣
Shu Yüan-pao 舒元褒
Shu Yüan-yü 舒元渥
Shu-mi Council (Shu-mi councillors) 稽密院 稽密使
Shun-tsung 順宗
Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光
Ssu-men Institute 四門監
Sung Min-ch'iu 宋敏求
Sung Shen-hsi 宋申錫
Ta-ming kung 大明宮
T'ai-ho (T'ai-ho yeh-shih) 太和 太和野史
T'ai-hsüeh 太學
T'ai-p'ing chih-ts'e 太平之策
T'ai-yüan 太原
T'ang dynasty 唐朝
tang (tang-p'ai, p'eng-tang) 唐 黃派 傳
T'ang-k'o chi-k'ao 唐科記考
Ting Chü-hui 丁居晦
ting-kuo-ts'e lao 定國筆老
Tsa-shih 雜史
tsan 賢
Tso-yu Guards 左右衛
Tsu-an-i chi 管冕記
Ts'ui Chen-yu 皇慎由
Ts'ui Yin 崔胤
T'u-t'u Ch'eng-ts'ui 吐突承璀
T'u-fan 吐蕃
Tzu-ch'en Palace 鎮寢宮
Tzu-chih t'ung-chien (K'ao-i) 贊治通鑾 考異
Uighur 伊鵝
Wang Chien-yen 王践言
Wang Fan 王璠
Wang Ming-sheng 王鳴盛
Wang P'ei 王俽
Wang Shou-ch'eng 王守澄
Wang Shou-chüan 王守涓
Wang Shu-wen 王叔文
Wang Yai 王涯
Wei Cheng 魏徵
Wei Chih-i 魏徵
Wei Feng 魏逢
Wei Mo 魏模
Wei Pao-heng 魏保衡
Wei Yuan-su 魏元素
Wei Guards 武衛
Wei-chou 維州
Wei-po 魏博
Wen-tsung 文宗
Wu Chao 武昭
Wu Chung-yin 烏重胤
Wu Yüan-heng 武元衡
Wu Guards 武衛
Wu-tai 五代
Wu-tsung 武宗
Yang Ch'eng-ho 楊承知
Yang Ch'in-i 楊欽義
yin privileges 藥
Yin River 伊水
Yü-Hung-chih 魚弘志
Yü-chou 淇州
Yü-lin Armies 羽林軍
Yüan Hui 元回
Yüan-ho Restoration (Yüan-ho ni-tang) 元和中興 元和逆黨
Yung-chen 永真
yung-ping 用兵