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CLASS FROM LATE SILLA TO EARLY KORYŎ.**

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOREAN RULING CLASS
FROM LATE SILLA TO EARLY KORYŎ

by

HI-WOONG KANG

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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We have carefully read the dissertation entitled "The Development of the Korean Ruling Class from Late Silla to Early Koryŏ"

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submitted by

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

In this thesis Mr. Hi-Woong Kang deals with a most important period in Korean history, the period of the emergence of a social and political order that became characteristic for Korean state and society until modern times. The governing class in Korea, which became known as the Yangban, combined elements of the Chinese system of an educated non-hereditary gentry class with the principle of hereditary aristocracy as it existed also in Japan. The formation of this ruling class in pre-twelfth century Korea and its powerful role under the formal authority of a monarchy is described in Mr. Kang's thesis.

Mr. Kang traces the basic continuity in the role of the powerful families of the Silla aristocracy into early Koryo time. He discusses the attempts of military-political upstarts to break through the system -- attempts which were in the end unsuccessful; and he describes the eventual compromise between the principles of the Chinese Confucian system and the hereditary role of the aristocracy arrived at under the new Koryo rulers.

In dealing with a period of change and great complexity Mr. Kang has demonstrated ingenuity and resourcefulness in handling the limited source material. His thesis has made an important contribution to our understanding of the social and political order in earlier Korean history and could become a starting point for further studies. We recommend its acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the doctoral degree.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE:

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CHAPTER I

THE SILLA ARISTOCRACY

Before the Korean peninsula was politically unified by Silla in 668, Korea was divided into three contending kingdoms of Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla. Among the three kingdoms Silla was the weakest and least developed country, growing as it did out of six loosely confederated tribes in the southeastern corner of the peninsula. Her relative weakness and backwardness were due in part to her small size and rugged territory, and perhaps more importantly, to her cultural isolation from the center of the Chinese colony in Korea, Lo-lang. Her geographical location cut her off from the main flow of cultural influence from China since she was neighbored by Koguryŏ in the north and Paekche in the west. Consequently she received little benefit directly from advanced Chinese culture until she established a direct contact with China by the sea at a much later time than her two neighbors did. Yet she still managed to be the first unifier of Korea, and it was her culture which became the basis for Korean culture.

It is true that the major burden of the military conquest of Paekche and Koguryŏ was borne by T'ang China who fought against the two Korean kingdoms in alliance with Silla. It is difficult to conceive, however, that the T'ang armies alone could have destroyed the Korean kingdoms so successfully and have caused them so completely and permanently to disappear from the peninsula as independent nations. One need only recall that

T'ang as well as Sui had earlier attempted to destroy Koguryō single-handedly and had failed. In fact, the military disaster in Korea precipitated a series of internal reaction in Sui and led to the change of dynasty in China. It was also T'ang's earlier failure to invade Koguryō that eventually led T'ang Kao-tsung to accept Silla's offer to form a military alliance against Koguryō and Paekche. The successful conquest of Paekche in 660 and Koguryō in 668 was made possible when T'ang armies were assisted by the arms and logistic supplies of Silla as a result of the alliance. Silla, however, did not make her arms and other resources available to T'ang simply to make T'ang Kao-tsung a new overlord in Korea; rather she was interested in fulfilling her own territorial ambition. She was following, in fact, the course which would enable her to realize her own design for Korea's unification. The military conflict which ensued between the two victorious allies resulted in the forced withdrawal of the Chinese armies from the peninsula and in T'ang Kao-tsung's final acknowledgment of the political supremacy of Silla over Korea. Indeed, Silla won political hegemony over the peninsula not so much as a result of the military undertaking of T'ang against Koguryō and Paekche; rather Sillan supremacy resulted from the farsighted diplomacy, shrewd statesmanship, and military genius of the Silla aristocratic leaders who guided the kingdom in the crucial years of her expansion. Moreover, the decisive role of the Silla aristocracy was not confined only to the physical unification, but it also extended to the even more crucial task of unifying Korea culturally.

The task of building a homogenous nation out of three for-

merly independent nations fell squarely on the shoulders of the Silla aristocratic leaders after the unification. They instituted many lasting innovations with the aim of consolidating the cultural foundation of the new unified kingdom. Ideas were borrowed from China, but most innovations sprang from the original tribal society of Silla. The new unified Korea which emerged out of these innovations and their harmonizing influence was a nation of considerable political uniformity with an underlying common national culture. In fact, the uniformity achieved was so strong that Korea has remained ever since a nation with its own distinctive political, cultural, and ethnic identity. This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that after the unification the increasing contact between Silla and T'ang brought Chinese cultural influence to Korea in proportions hitherto unknown, resulting in the absorption of many Chinese institutions and ideas. It should be stressed, however, that even after Silla had embarked for a course which subjected her to ever increasing Chinese cultural influence her leaders adopted an eclectic attitude toward the introduction of alien institutions and ideas in Korea and steadfastly maintained this attitude throughout her history. On the other hand, they tried to preserve most essential institutions and ideas from the aboriginal tribal society, extending them to the new territories as she expanded. As a result, the social order of the new unified kingdom was basically not very different from the older social order of the Silla tribal society; it was essentially an extension of the original Sillan aristocratic social order to the expanded population of the new unified kingdom. The aristocratic rule of the Silla tribal

society, in other words, was preserved in the Korean social order by Silla and it remained the basic social order until the end of the nineteenth century. It is with special significance, therefore, that we study the nature of the Silla aristocracy in this chapter as an important preparation for our investigation of the relationship with the Koryo ruling class.

The Kolp'um System

The basis of the Silla aristocracy was the kolp'um (literally "bone-rank"), a system of social stratification based on birth. The aristocracy under this system was divided into five social strata: sǒnggol, chingol, yuktup'um or tǔngnan, odup'um or saengjok, and sadup'um or kǔngol.¹ The first two bones belonged only to the royal clans of Pak, Kim, and Sǒk whereas the lower three Bones belonged to the noble clans. Only the holders of the two highest Bone ranks--that is, the descendants of the three royal lines--were eligible as candidates for the Silla throne. Traditionally the king was chosen from them by the Council of State known as the Hwabaek probably on the basis of ability and political influence.² Though the composition of the

¹It is probable, although we lack proof, that there were three more Bones--samdup'um for the commoners, idup'um for the "mean people," and ildup'um for the slaves--in addition to the five aristocratic Bone ranks. For studies on the kolp'um system, see: Imanishi Ryū, Shiragishi Kenkyū (Keijō, 1933), pp. 199-201, 236-238; Ikeuchi Hiroshi, "Shiragi no Kotsuhinsei to Ōtō," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (Aug., 1941), pp. 1-34; and Suematsu Yasukazu, Shiragishi no Shomondai (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 511-512.

²Yi Pyōng-do, "Kodae Namdang Ko," Sōul Taehakkyo Nonmunjip, Vol. I (Mar., 1954), pp. 1-20.

Council members is not spelled out in any extant sources, it is not difficult to conjecture that it consisted of the great nobles of the two highest Bones, for the two royal Bones also had the monopoly of the top five ranks in the seventeen-grade official hierarchy.³ This means that all the high offices in the government, including membership in the Council of State, were preserved for the holders of the first two Bone ranks who were the descendants of the royal families. The nobles of the three lower Bones were eligible only for lesser official ranks and for positions which corresponded to their lower Bone status. Thus, the highest ranks attainable to the odup'um and the sadup'um were the tenth and twelfth grades, respectively, in the seventeen-grade system of the official hierarchy. (See Chart 1.)

The rules governing the kolp'um system were so stringent that even when a demand for upward mobility, resulting from numerical expansion in the aristocratic ranks, pressed for a readjustment of the ceilings in the Bone ranking system, Silla

³Although our sources stop short of specifying the Bone qualification of the Councilor, the six names which appear in connection with one such meeting and the terminology used in all sources in reference to the Councilors--such expressions as "The men of state (kugin)," "the great minister (taesin)," and "the ranking officials (kunsin)"--indicate that the ranks of the Councilor were undoubtedly high enough to be the royal bone status. Moreover, as we shall see, the authority vested in the Council was sufficiently important to warrant such composition. Il-lyŏn, Samgugyusa (Chŏng-dŏk edition; Kyŏtŏ; Kyŏtŏ Imperial University, 1911), kwŏn 1, pp. 24a, 27ab. (Hereafter SY for the Samgugyusa, and Arabic numerals separated by colon for kwŏn and double leaf page, respectively.) Kim Pu-sik and others, Samguksagi (Chong-dok edition; Keijo: Koten-kankokai, 1931); 5:1a, 12a; 10:1ab. (Hereafter SS); Liu Hsu and others, Chiu-T'ang-shu, (Erh-shih-ssu-shih. Po-nan-pen; Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1930-7), Chŭan 199 shang, p. 10b; and Yi Ki-baek, "Taedŭng Ko," Yŏksahakpo, Combined Issue of Volumes XVII and XVIII (June, 1962), pp. 27-50.

resisted it to the end by retaining the original structure of the prescribed ceiling system. In fact, no change in the ceiling system was feasible so long as the maxim of the kolp'um society prescribed birth as the primary qualification for fitness in government. The only adjustment possible under the maxim was to further subdivide the ranks within the limitation of the existing ceilings. This is exactly what Silla chose to do when the time came. As the pressure for expansion of the aristocratic ranks became greater and finally too great, Silla resolved it simply by adding to the original seventeen-grade system a few new grades to each Bone rank division without making any change, however, to the basic rule of the Bone rank structure. In other words, two honorific grades were added to the top of the highest grade for the exclusive use of the royal Bones and this was later followed by the subdivision of the sixth grade into four new sub-grades for the yuktugol, the subdivision of the tenth grade into nine new sub-grades, and the eleventh grade into seven new sub-grades both for the odugol. (See Chart 1) Again, these subdivisions were made with no change whatsoever to the more important ceiling system. The effort directed in making readjustments to fix each aristocratic Bone to its prescribed social stratum indicates that Silla planned to preserve the old kolp'um social order even after she established a unified kingdom in Korea.

Under the kolp'um system of unified Silla, birth continued to determine the social status and the functions of every individual; all other considerations, including merits and talents, were at best of secondary importance. All social functions were

continuously defined strictly on the basis of the hereditary social order and nothing was permitted to disrupt this social order.⁴ Indeed, the social order of the unified Silla kingdom, having survived the interruption of the Latter Three Kingdoms period (900-935), was to be transmitted to Koryŏ under a thin guise of Confucian social order. Consequently, even long after Confucianism had formally been proclaimed as the official ideology, Korea had really never succeeded in displacing the old Sillan social order with the Confucian order. In traditional Korea, power was always exercised by a governing class restricted by birth, not by merit or education. The latter two were allowed to play some part but only within the framework of the hereditary social order.

Moreover, in the kolp'um society each of the four strata in the aristocracy constituted an inbreeding caste-like social group. No inter-marriage between members of different strata was formally permitted.⁵ Should a man of royal birth take a woman of lesser social status, it was only as a concubine, not as a legitimate wife; and a child born to the concubine would inherit not his father's Bone status but his mother's, whichever Bone his mother happened to have. Only a child born of parents from the same Bone status could inherit his father's Bone status. Should a woman of higher Bone status marry a man

4SS 47:5b-6a.

⁵Mishina Shōei, "Shiragi no Kotsuhinsei ni Tsuite," Chōsen-gakuhō, Vol. XXIII (April, 1962), pp. 186-187. For the possible existence of dual organization in Silla, see: Kim Ch'ŏl-jun, "Silla Sangdae Sahoe ūi Dual Organization," Yōksahakpo, Vols. I and II (July, and Oct., 1952), pp. 15-47 and 85-113.

of lower Bone status, this would constitute a breach of the highest order in Silla, and there is some basis to believe that such a crime was generally punishable by scorching to death.⁶ Consequently, we find a wide practice of endogamy in Silla. A geneology table of the Silla kings shows numerous cases of marriages between brother and sister or between cousins. In short, the Silla kolp'um system was based upon the rule of preservation of the best through inbreeding.

The rigidity of social differentiation of Silla society is shown by the Sillan regulations on clothing, carriage, house, and furnitures.⁷ These rules determined the colors and the kinds of materials for each Bone stratum. The higher the Bone status, the more precious were the allotted materials. Strict observation of these regulations was decreed in a royal edict as late as 834 and its transgressors were severely punished.⁸ A mere reproduction of the list of the tabooed items here is superfluous for our purpose; rather we should point out the social implications which the regulations outwardly symbolized. Needless to say, these materials were used as status symbols by each Bone stratum. The social meaning of each Bone was clearly defined because birth after all is socially unimportant unless it is generally known and actually acknowledged as the basis of power.

⁶For example, Kim Yu-sin tried to scorch his sister to death when her illicit relationship with a royal prince, Kim Ch'un-ch'u, was discovered. Her death, however, was prevented by the Silla Queen's timely intervention. SY 1:29b-30a.

⁷SS 33:1a-11a.

⁸SS 33:2ab.

The Oligarchical Power Structure

If birth determined one's Bone status, which in turn became the basis of power, we should then ask what was the power relationship between members of the same Bone status? What, for example, was the authority of the king over the rest of the royal Bones, especially over the Councilors of State who elected him? What was the power relationship between the monarch and his electorate, the Council? For the crucial question of the ultimate source of sovereignty in Silla we do not find a ready answer. However, the fact that the Council had among its functions the selection, and even removal at times, of the king, as well as the right to decide war and peace, leaves little doubt that it had more power than the monarch, and thus it was constituted the highest organ of the state. The Council's prerogative to choose and even depose the king, presumably at its own initiative, clearly indicates the strength of its authority. The Council's powerful authority, which had obviously grown out of its original function as the council of co-equal chieftans of the six aboriginal tribes in Silla, should explain the tradition of a relatively weak monarchy in Silla.

The early Silla monarch, who was chosen by this Council, appears to have performed ceremonial functions merely as the chief representative of the tribal confederacy. His duty seems to have been to conduct only those religious ceremonies and temporal affairs of the confederacy which commonly affected all tribes. He kept, for example, until 503 A.D., the title

which suggests his role either as the chief priest (ch'ach'aung) or a great chieftain (nisagŭm or mariphan) but not as an all-powerful sovereign ruler. His authority was apparently vested in the will of the chieftains who made up the Council. Even after he assumed the Chinese title of wang in 503, which may be safely taken as a manifestation of the growing influence of the Chinese political system in Silla, his monarchical authority rarely appears to have overshadowed the power of the Council. In fact, during the times of grave national emergency, as the wars of the unification in the seventh century can testify, powerful generals, like Kim Yu-sin, Kim In-mun, and others, stood around the king and exerted effective influence over him.

The Council as an institutionalized organ, which was originally composed of co-equal chieftains and later of great nobles of the royal Bones, apparently exercised supreme authority in the state. The monarch was the leader of this ruling group by virtue of his authority as the head of the state. Frequently he was the most influential person among the Council members, but at times it appears that he was chosen merely on the basis of his closer kinship to his royal predecessor. The existence of a few queens in Silla, as well as many weak and inefficacious kings, illustrates this point quite well.

Since the throne was more a position of leadership and the symbol of tribal unity rather than the source of power, eventually it was occupied through the Chinese system of monarchical succession along the single family line. This, however, proved to be no better a method of succession for Silla as it produced more frequent eruption of dissension and

open revolts among the contenders for power than before.

If a weak monarchy was fostered mainly by the existence of the all-powerful Council of State, a maintenance of the balance of power among its influential Councilors was the vital prerequisite for the proper functioning of the Silla government. What were the real bases for the maintenance of political equilibrium among the Councilors? The answer is found, in the final analysis, in the existence of an independent power base for each Councilor in his own tribal territory and in the Councilors' paramount common necessity to pool their resources together in order to defend their territories in the face of ever-present external threats.

Originally, great Silla nobles came from six tribes of Silla. As independent tribal chieftains, they had their basis of power in their separate tribal organizations. Even after the six tribes formed the confederacy among themselves, they kept their separate tribal organizations and participated in the new confederacy as an autonomous body. The chieftains of the tribes continued to draw power from their own tribal organizations which functioned pretty much untouched by the new confederate government. This is indicated by the fact that the Silla capital was divided into six administrative areas (Pu), and that each area was designated to one of the six tribes.⁹ These administrative areas apparently became the six tribes' permanent capital quarters from which they participated in the con-

⁹ Sŏul Taehak Kuksa Yŏnguhoe (Yi In-yŏng and others), Kuksageron (Seoul, 1954, pp. 81-89; and Suematsu, op. cit., pp. 235-307.

federated government.

The real base of their independent power, however, was their local tribal territory which lay outside the capital area and the resources from the tribal territory supported their tribal military forces, commonly called the chong, which each of the six tribes maintained in its own area. The six chǒng, together with their capital detachments (kijǒng) and the palace guard, which was probably drawn from the best troops of the three strongest tribes, comprised the entire Silla army before the unification. Later, as Silla extended her territory, she also expanded her army. This expansion was not only the result of a corresponding growth in the six original tribes and their armies but it was also due to the increasing numbers of new tribes which joined Silla as their territories came under Silla control. The tribes of Karak and the subjugated people of Paekche and Koguryǒ were good examples of these new additions to the growing Silla army.

The rapid growth of both the territory and the army finally made it necessary for Silla to reorganize her army into nine banners, called sǒdang, about the time of the unification. Banners were also organized along the tribal origins of troops, thus retaining the basic military organization of earlier Silla. Nine banners consisted of three Silla banners, which were made out of the original Sillanese army; two Paekche banners, created out of recruits from the subjugated people of Paekche; one Malgal (Mo-ho in Chinese) banner, made up by a southern Manchurian tribe who was formerly under Koguryǒ rule; and three Koguryǒ banners which were composed of one banner of the sub-

jugated Koguryō people and two banners of the Koguryō loyalist troops that had rallied around Ansŭng, a Koguryō prince, who was put out as the legitimate successor to the fallen Koguryō throne by Silla when the latter fought the T'ang armies over the control of the old Koguryō territory. How much autonomy each banner was allowed to maintain is not clear. In the case of the subjugated Koguryō banner, one of its officers was a Silla royal Bone aristocrat,¹⁰ but the fact that the tribal identity was preserved even in the armies of the unified kingdom tends to support the assertion that the tribal integrity of the conquered territories was generally respected by Silla. This is also evident in the fact that Silla recognized the basic order of ranks of the subjugated kingdoms, be it the rank of Karak, Paekche, or Koguryō, although Silla did not place them exactly on an equal basis with its own when she replaced them with the Sillan ranks.¹¹ In other words, when Silla absorbed the official hierarchy of her former enemies, she caused no significant change to the internal power structure of these societies so as to use their hierarchy to rule them indirectly. Thus she permitted the subjugated people to retain their own tribal organizations and she left them to look after their own affairs basically by themselves and to bear collectively the burden imposed upon them by her. Clearly such indirect control system was an outgrowth of the practice in the original Silla confederacy which was now extended to the population of the newly

¹⁰SS 47:7a.

¹¹SS 40:17b, 18a.

conquered territories.

To insure the political control of the new unified kingdom, however, Silla established nine regional political centers called Chu, allocating three centers to each of the former three kingdoms. Each of them was then placed under the charge of a military overlord called the Kunju. To back up the authority of the Kunju, Silla stationed her garrison forces, known as sip chǒng, a chǒng to each of the nine regional centers, except one, strategically located Hanju which had two garrison stations because of its importance as the gate-way to Silla from China by land. The Kunju, though reportedly first established in 508, was also basically an institutional outgrowth of the original tribal confederacy of Silla. As Silla expanded her territory, certain chieftains in the confederacy, usually the ones whose tribes had carried heaviest military burdens in the pacification campaign, came to assume the tasks of overlords in the territory just conquered. These chieftains, at first acting on behalf of their own tribes, seem to have discharged both civil and military authority in the area. But, in time, they apparently developed themselves into feudalistic military overlords upon whom the title Kunju was later conferred by the Silla court.

It is very important to point out in this connection that the development of the Kunju system coincided with the growth of a Chinese type of family system in Silla. The growth of families in Silla was facilitated not only by the increasing cultural influence from China but also by the gradual breakdown of the tribal organizations in Silla. The rapid growth

of tribes made it virtually impossible for the Sillanese to keep their original tribal organizations intact and to maintain tribal cohesion when a portion of the tribe was branched out and settled permanently in remote areas. The territorial expansion also promised new political and economic opportunities for many members of the tribe and such opportunities too often became the basis for them to break away from the tribal bondage. The gradual breakdown of the tribal bondage often hastened the growth of a new social unit based upon a clan or large family, which proved to be more mobile and more tightly and readily identifiable for the individual members of the disintegrating tribe in the fast-growing society of Silla. It would be erroneous, however, to think that this new development had compelled the people to forsake altogether the proven virtues of the tribal society. As we shall see later, the Sillanese showed a surprisingly persistent conservatism throughout her history when it came to the question of discarding their age-old institutions. As a result, the Sillanese in general succeeded in preserving many old traditions from their disintegrating society. At the same time they made many alterations to meet the constantly changing requirements of their growing society through modification and displacement.

The growth of the clan-based family system, in turn, provided a strong impetus for the expanding Silla to develop a system of well-defined aristocracy out of the tribal organizations. Through a complicated process of social differentiation, which will probably never be fully known to us, the group which rose to the top of the social ladder apparently were the chieftains

of the six tribes and a few others like the tribes of the Karak Kingdom who joined Silla under the latter's military pressure. It was these chieftains of expanding Silla who heaped a fortune through their share of the war spoils, increased their power as triumphant military leaders and became the Kunju and the Councilors of the State. The position of the Kunju, in particular, with its civil and military authorities over a vast region, furnished them an opportunity to build up a large army which became the basis of their personal power; for, in the politically diffused society of Silla, the responsibility of equipping and supplying the garrison army fell largely on the shoulders of a Kunju and the army pledged the allegiance of loyalty to him personally.¹² The region under his control provided the sources of the necessary revenue and recruits for his army, thus constituting the basis of his personal power. Although the Kunju changed its official designation to the Ch'onggwon (661) and Todok (785) after the names of the T'ang provincial commandary, the basic structure of the Kunju system went unchanged. With the formalization of the Silla institution, the rank of the Kunju was set from the ninth grade to the second grade in the official hierarchy. Apparently this was a mere formalization of the old practice that began when some leaders of the six tribes settled in the newly acquired territories at the beginning of the expansion.¹³ Ever since the Kunju position had been reserved exclusively for the royal Bones.

¹²Yi Ki-baek, "Silla Sabyöng Ko," Yöksahakpo, Vol. IX (May, 1957), pp. 1-64.

¹³SS 40:16b-17b.

The conspicuous omission of the highest grade from the rank of the Kunju appears to have been for the simple reason that it was designated as the rank of the Councilors of the State. In general, the practice seems to have been for a Kunju to appoint himself to the Councilorship after the completion of his term as the Kunju of his region. He would then proceed to the capital to participate in the Council of the State which dealt with the affairs of the whole Kingdom. His voice as an equal partner in the Council was guaranteed by the provision that required the unanimous consent of the participants for all decisions of the Council.

The existence of many regional power bases in the Kingdom seems to have obstructed little the development of the Council as a cohesive organ of the highest political authority in early Silla. True, one can find in the Silla political system a number of mechanisms which indicate the attempt of the central authority to counteract the danger of complete local independence in the region. But, these measures were introduced in Silla after the unification when she had a vast number of subjugated people under her domination. The so-called so-gyōng system, which was established in five major political centers for the obvious reason of keeping the autonomous power in the region under control (see Map 1), and a system of political hostage, known as the sangsuri, which required all local leaders to spend a fixed period of time in the capital attending to the affairs of the central government, were two of these control mechanisms.

But, in spite of these ominous indications of strong local-

ism in unified Silla, local chiefdoms in early Silla generally manifested a remarkable degree of zeal for unity. Two things seem to have been responsible for this unusual show of unity. One was the Hwabaek which provided a forum for the autonomous chieftains in search of a united action for their common interest; and the second and more basic factor was the common interest itself--the survival under the threat of hostile neighbors. Ever since the original six tribes of Silla formed a tribally confederate state among themselves,¹⁴ they had been constantly engaged in the common struggle of survival. Their first important adversaries were the surrounding Chinhan tribes whom they succeeded in overcoming probably before the mid-fourth century. Late in that century, however, Silla came under the attack of another hostile neighbor; this time, much more powerful Koguryō. For over a century Silla had to exist under the shadow of extinction which was brought about by repeated Koguryō expeditions against her territory.¹⁵ In 554 Silla, the weakest and most backward of the three kingdoms, had invited--on top of its troubles--the wrath of its second neighbor, Paekche, with whom she had been allied since 475 against the most powerful Koguryō, their common northern enemy. Unwittingly Silla drove Paekche to turn over to the enemy's side thus breaking an alliance of three-quarters of a century. Faced with the hopeless two-front battle against two superior neighbors, Silla tried, out of desperation, to obtain a military alliance with T'ang which had its

¹⁵For a period of nearly three decades between 468 and 498, for example, Koguryō sent out six major military expeditions against Silla.

own misgivings against Koguryō. In this venture, the diplomacy of Prince Kim Ch'un-Ch'ū proved to be timely and successful; it produced the T'ang-Silla joint military operation against the two Korean kingdoms. This operation of 655-668 brought an end to the threat from the two neighbors, though it also brought the prospect of a new and even more dreadful domination by the imperialistic T'ang China. The Sillan reaction was naturally to resist against the arbitrary dictation of her ally and to fight until she could win a free hand over the affairs of Korea.

Silla's successful unification of Korea, therefore, came only after a long series of wars of survival for the Sillanese. To them, the outcome of these wars would decide their fate as a nation. The miseries of the vanquished, the vicissitude of life as slaves or subjugated people, must have weighed heavily in their minds. To eliminate the sources of dreadful external danger to their security, they had to unite in spirit as well as in action so as to overcome their inferiority in fighting capacity. Under the circumstances, the stark reality of survival furnished the impetus to foster the unity and cohesion among the Sillan tribes. The unanimity required in the decisions of the early Hwabaek is testimonial to the solidarity sought by the tribal leaders at this time.

The cohesive character of the Silla leadership was preserved in the Hwabaek and transmitted to the future leaders through another famous Sillan institution, the Hwarang-do. Though variously interpreted by scholars, the basic function of this institution was essentially to provide the aristocratic children with the necessary training for assuming future leader-

ship. Grouped together in a varied number, these aristocratic teenage boys were gathered around a leader, called the Hwarang, who was chosen on the basis of his exemplary conduct and his promising talents, as well as by his Bone qualification. The ideals and tasks set for them included political and military indoctrinations, which stressed among other things the spirits of self-discipline and self-sacrifice in their devotion to the causes of the state. These spirits were soon identified as the dignity and pride of the Silla aristocracy and its leadership. Thus, the idealized qualities of leadership in Silla stressed militant martial spirit, a strong sense of patriotism and, above all, courage, which defied danger.

In this indoctrination, Silla assigned a significant role to the Buddhist clergy. They were employed to assist in training the future leaders in moral and spiritual needs. In addition the clergy also provided the basic instructions of reading and writing in Chinese as well as Idu style. Ever since Silla had officially adopted Buddhism in 528 it had enlisted increasingly the assistance of the Buddhist clergy to exalt the cult of the state. Through their prayers Silla hoped to safeguard the nation from external and internal troubles. The pacifistic monks were compelled to change their views. A learned priest, Wŏn-gwang, reluctantly succumbed in 609 to the royal request of drawing up a petition to the Sui emperor for relief army to attack Koguryŏ. But later his conversion became so complete that, under the request of two boys, he produced his celebrated five commandments for the benefit of the secular aristocratic youth. The commandments instructed: "one, serve the ruler with loyalty;

two, serve the parents with filial piety; three, treat friend with trust; four, engage in battle without retreat; and five, kill the living with selectivity."¹⁶

The Buddhist clergy gradually took the lead in providing an ideology for the state through their application of the creed Mahazana-Buddha-Sasana-Sutra. And the government increasingly relied upon the Buddhist clergy for spiritual as well as ideological guidance. On matters of importance for the state their advice was constantly sought by the king and the Council. It should be pointed out, however, that the ideology provided by the Buddhist clergy, as shown in the five commandments of Wŏn-gwang, contained very little pure Buddhist doctrines; rather it was comprised of the mixture of many different doctrines derived from the indigenous Shamanism, Taoism, Confucianism, as well as Buddhism, but presented by the clergy under the guise of Mahayana Buddhism.¹⁷ Its main aim was to give necessary sanction to the existing social order and to seek its preservation through the blessing of divine protection.

The Buddhist clergy in Silla enjoyed a unique position in that they were virtually the only educated group with sufficient articulation to render teaching and other intellectual services to the state at that time. They also possessed a body of

¹⁶SS 45:11b-12a.

¹⁷Kim Chong-sun, Hwarang and the First Unification of Korea (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1961). pp. 65-97. And also for Buddhism in Silla see: Kim Tong-hwa, "Silla-sidae ūi Pulgyo-sasang," Aseayŏngu, Vol. V, No. 2 (Nov., 1962), pp. 37-41; Vol. VI, Nos. 1-2 (May, and Dec., 1963), pp. 367-421 and 127-168; and Vol. VII, No. 1 (Mar., 1964) pp. 79-117.

ethical doctrines which could readily be utilized by the leaders. In addition, it spoke a language distinctly its own, that of a mystic religion, which undoubtedly impressed most receptive minds. Moreover, the clergy itself was drawn primarily from the noble class. Above all, the severe adversities of the troubled kingdom compelled the Silla leaders to seek earnestly for a moral and spiritual armament and they found it in Buddhism.

The aristocratic youth leaders trained under the guidance of the Buddhist clergy were singularly devoted to the tasks and ideals set for them. They were loyal, courageous, and filial. At the same time, they were sensitive to the beauty and the mystic power of nature. It is often said that they were both delicate like a poet and brutal like a savage. Above all, they seem to have been fanatically devoted to the causes of the state, so much so that this became the matter of faith for them. The eagerness with which they could so readily risk their lives, sometimes even at the mere mention of a lofty cause, seems ludicrous to the outsiders; but, this was recognized as the personification of the Hwarang ideals by the Sillanese and was lavishly praised to the point of adoration and worship by the Silla leaders.

It is easy to understand how the aristocratic youth in Silla, trained in such ideals, developed themselves to be the dedicated leaders who led their country through the difficult wars of survival and finally to the position of political supremacy in Korea. Their strong sense of devotion to the causes of the state and the Sillan aristocratic order might account for the courage and zeal with which they sought the unity of

purpose and action among themselves during the period of expansion.

The Royal Bones and the Crown

The cohesive nature of the Silla aristocracy and the mechanism of the oligarchical rule pose for us some interesting questions about the position of the monarch in Silla. Was he merely a partner in the oligarchical rule? Or did he, because of his crown, enjoy more power than the members of the oligarchical Council did? What was the basis for his claim to the crown? How did he secure the crown for himself when he had to compete with other contenders for the honor? And, after he had secured it, how did he maintain his position as the king? In short, what was his relationship with the oligarchical Councilors of State? It is hoped that even a cursory look (which is the best we can get from the extant sources) at the records of the Karak ruling house, which produced such imposing figures as Kim Yu-sin, will give us some clue to this important question. It will also throw some light on the process through which the chieftain of a non-original Silla tribe had been successfully absorbed into the Silla ruling circle.

When the head of the Karak ruling family, Kim Ku-hae, surrendered his small Kingdom of Kŭmgwan-gaya to Silla in 532, probably under military pressure, he was permitted to retain the kingdom as his fief (sigŭp). He was also given a title of (Chief?) Councilor (sangdŭng), which indicates his probable membership in the Hwabaek along with his admission to the Silla

aristocracy. In other words, when his kingdom was absorbed by Silla, he was permitted to retain the power base in his own territory as well as hold a voice in the policy deliberation of the Silla government. His acceptance of these terms is suggested by the activity of his youngest son, Mu-ryōk, who subsequently led a major counter-offensive campaign which Silla launched against Koguryō deep inside the enemy's territory.

In 553 Mu-ryōk, now a holder of the sixth grade rank, was appointed to the Kunju of Sinju (present Kwangju, Kyōnggido) which had just been added to Silla after a military expedition against the Paekche army in the area.¹⁸ It may be safely assumed, then, that the appointment was made on the basis of the important role which the Karak army, led by Mu-ryōk, had played in the campaign, and that the appointment could be probably construed as the formal acquisition of his personal power base in the area. If so, the appointment signifies, first of all, his branching off from his father's home base, and secondly, his establishment of an independent power base in a new territory. For, as mentioned already, the Kunju possessed a personal army under his command, and though it was a centrally appointed office, its power constituted an autonomous authority in the territory under his jurisdiction. In any case, we find Mu-ryōk subsequently rising to the highest Silla rank of the kakkan, which indicates his membership in the Council of State. Indeed, Mu-ryōk's son appears to have felt his position in Silla sufficiently secure, probably under the protection

¹⁸SS 4:7b.

of his father's prestige and power, to transgress the Silla rule of endogamy by eloping with a royal princess; and yet, he got away with it unpunished, thus managing to draw his family closer to the Silla royal Bone. He later rose to the third grade rank and the Ch'onggwan of Yangju (present Hyöpch'ön). The rank and position indicate his royal Bone status, possibly chingol.

The power and influence of the Kim family, however, did not reach their highest point until the fourth generation from Ku-hae. The long brilliant records of Kim Yu-Sin, who devised the strategy of Silla during the unification war, unmistakably reveal the unchallengeable position the family had established in Silla. Yet, in spite of his high ambition and his formidable power, he seems never to have attempted to take over the Silla government or to usurp the Silla crown. As a young boy he was one of the most celebrated Hwarang of Silla. As a youth, he connivingly arranged a marriage between his sister, Mun-hi, and his close friend, Prince Kim Ch'un-Ch'u--a marriage which was to cause the degradation of the royal Bone from the sönggol to the chingol when the Prince ascended the Silla throne in 654.¹⁹ In 647, as the Kunju of Abyangju (present Kyöngsan) and a holder of the third grade rank, he managed to crush the force led by a Chief Councilor who opposed the choice of a princess to succeed the first Silla queen who had just died. In 654, with the authority of the second highest rank and the power of a grand Ch'onggwan of Sangju (present Sangju Kyöng-

¹⁹Suematsu, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

sang-pukdo), he gave his powerful support in the Council of State to his brother-in-law and close political associate, Prince Kim Ch'un-ch'u, to be the successor to the second Queen, whose reign marked the end of the line of the sŏnggol ruler. Yu-sin's position required the actual reversal of the earlier decision of the Council which named the Chief Councilor, Al-ch'ŏn, as the regent. His powerful influence obviously caused the Chief Councilor to decline the regency offered and support the prince's succession. Thus, Yu-sin became the chief architect in creating the first chingol monarch in Silla.²⁰

In the following year Yu-sin received in marriage Princess Chi-ch'o, King Ch'un-ch'u's (Mu-yŏl wang) daughter and his own niece. The marriage, in theory at least, had acknowledged the Kim family's endogamic relationship with the royal family. In terms of the Bone qualification, the marriage should have signified formal acknowledgment of the royal Bone status for Kim Yu-Sin's family. In fact, Yu-sin was posthumously given the title of Great King Hŭng-mu. But some kind of actual differentiation between the Bone status of his family and that of the royal family seems to have remained thereafter, possibly because of their two different ancestral origins--the Karak and Silla ruling houses, respectively.

Although Yu-Sin reached in 659 the highest official position of Chief Councilor, which frequently became the stepping stone to the crown in Silla, though he had received the two super grade ranks of the Taegakkan and T'ae-daegakkan subsequently,

²⁰ SS 5:12a; 42:2a.

neither he nor his direct descendants ever climbed to the throne of the Silla kingdom. Evidently this was not because of any lack of talent, prestige, or power on Yu-sin's or his descendants' part to ascend the throne. On the contrary, evidence indicates that he had actually become one of the most powerful and influential leaders in Silla as early as 647, when he successfully defended the succession of the second queen with his troops. His power and prestige singularly rose ever since; and he had, in all probability, become the most influential man in Silla around the time of the unification. Then he was not only the Chief Councilor; but he also was the commander-in-chief of the Silla army in the field which assisted the T'ang expedition forces against Paekche and Koguryō. Also, it was at this time that Silla established a super-rank on the top of the regular seventeen-grade hierarchy to decorate him as a triumphant military hero. Neither did he completely lack any opportune time to crown himself, if he so wished; for in 661, during the height of his power, King Ch'un-ch'u died leaving the throne vacant until Crown Prince Pōb-min's succession. It is true that the rule of the primogeniture became more noticeable around this time in Silla, possibly under the increasing Chinese cultural influence. However, the rule of primogeniture does not appear to have been unquestionably accepted by the Silla leaders at any time.

Although there was no disturbance at King Pōb-min's (Mun-mu wang) succession, his son, the Crown Prince Chōng-myōng, had to surmount a serious opposition, involving the Chief Councilor, the Crown Prince's own father-in-law, and several others, before the succession. Neither had the rule of primogeniture been

strictly observed by the later Silla leaders. The struggle for succession was no rare feat in late Silla as the oligarchical rule of the Council of State declined at the face of increasing regional independence.

The fact that Yu-sin made no attempt to become king can only be explained by his inclination to adhere to the constitution of the Silla government which precluded his chance. It is possible that as the most influential member of the Council of State he might have been in a position to influence the Silla policy in the most decisive way even without occupying the rather formal leadership position of the monarch. On the other hand, armed with the prestige of the sacred royal Bone, Pöb-min was probably able to command respect of all Silla leaders and to represent the collective interest of the Silla aristocracy. This would have enabled him to outrace Yu-sin in the contest for the crown.

In any case, that the Council often remained under the political influence of a strong-minded individual councilor, like able Yu-sin, did not necessarily disrupt the political equilibrium between the Council and the monarch. True, Yu-sin could, and apparently did, play the role of a king-maker more than once. But there was nothing improper in his conduct as far as we can determine from the extant sources. One could suspect his motive to back up his brother-in-law, Ch'un-ch'u, for the crown. But here again he seems to have managed to gain the support of the Council for his choice. Nobody seems to have seriously challenged the choice even though it meant the change of the royal Bone in Silla.

On the other hand, there are reasons to believe that Ch'un-ch'u was a satisfactory choice at the time since Silla was then faced with an unusual national crisis. Because of increasing enemy attack, often deep inside her territory, Silla was militarily in a desperate situation and badly in need of outside help. At this critical juncture, Prince Ch'un-ch'u proved himself to be very valuable by demonstrating his superb diplomatic skill. The country needed his talent most urgently if she were to get badly needed military help from T'ang. He returned from his Chinese mission in 648, bringing with him the promise of T'ang T'ai-tsung to assist Silla with T'ang armies. The advantage of having him on the throne must have loomed high in the minds of the Sillan leaders. Besides, Ch'un-ch'u possessed talents not only as an able diplomat but also as a capable king. He soon proved himself to be one of the most successful rulers of Silla. His reign enabled Silla to take a giant step toward unification and to introduce many aspects of the brilliant T'ang culture. It seems clear, then, that when the Silla leaders were faced with a choice between the awesome prospect of extermination and the modification of the cardinal Bone qualifications of the monarch, they chose the latter. The degradation of the royal Bone also had its effect on the power relationship between the crown and the Council of State; the king became more and more a mere partner in the Council's oligarchical rule. When the machinery of the Council later broke down, the Silla kings found themselves powerless to cope with the problems of the disintegrating kingdom.

Another interesting point in the history of the Kim family

is the way it became absorbed into the Silla ruling circle. As an alien family it had to prove its own worth to Silla before it could obtain total acceptance. It is significant, therefore, that the members of the family demonstrated their loyalty and dedication to the Silla cause by carrying its share of the Sillan military burden before they secured their unquestionable position in the Silla leadership. On the other hand, once they were inside the ruling circle, they seem to have encountered no serious discrimination or resistance from the pure-breed Silla aristocrats on account of their different ancestry. Consequently, we find a rare unity and singleness in purpose among the Silla leadership as long as they maintained a common interest among themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SILLA ARISTOCRACY

Forces of Disintegration

The establishment of political hegemony over the peninsula removed all immediate external threats to the Sillan security in Korea. The last and most formidable threats were removed in 677, when she finally forced the withdrawal of the T'ang expedition forces from Korea and gained control over all of the peninsula, south of its narrowest waist. (See Map 1.) During her bid for the hegemony, Silla characteristically registered all the assistance she could get from the remnants of the Paekche and Koguryō royalists and formed a solid united front with them to frustrate the T'ang territorial ambition in Korea. It was in the best tradition of the Silla leadership to seek such unity among all internal forces in confronting a superior enemy. This was consistent with the established Silla policy of absorbing her adversaries into her own rank whenever possible. To the die-hard Paekche and Koguryō royalists who resisted against the T'ang occupation of their fallen kingdoms, Sillan leaders extended active aids as well as moral support. But it was clearly a temporary policy of expedience, not a reversal of Silla's avowed aim to annex the territories of her former enemies; for, in the end, Silla crushed the Koguryō restoration movement when members of the movement resisted her attempt to terminate the movement by bringing

their leader, An-sung, into the Silla aristocracy.¹ As far as Silla was concerned the movement had lost its significance when the T'ang armies were forced out of Korea. Silla was to forget that she had previously conferred the formal title of the Koguryō king on Prince An-sung. She could not afford to see the revival of the same threat to her security which she had just destroyed with the help of the T'ang armies.

The disappearance of the external threats also removed the immediate fear of possible foreign domination--the most effective factor which incessantly drove the great Silla nobles toward unity. The internal differences among them, which had been suppressed before, began to emerge to the surface, and in time threatened to destroy the internal unity and the effective functioning of the Hwabaek. The possibility of an open break among the great nobles was checked, however, at least temporarily, by the trend to strengthen the central authority. The centralization seems to have been originally precipitated by Silla expansion policy and it was continued after the unification under the increasing influence of the T'ang political system. Out of her own cultural and political needs Silla could not be indifferent to the attraction of the brilliant Chinese culture. Through the influx of students and pilgrims and through the regular tributary missions to China, Silla increasingly borrowed from the imperial T'ang institutions and used them to meet the new requirements of the unified kingdom.

As more and more officials were, for example, sent out to

¹SS 6:14b f, 15b-16a; 7:18a-19a, 3b; and SY 2:4a.

remote new territories as administrators and autonomous military rulers, the extension of central control over the newly-acquired territories became increasingly necessary. The appearance of Chinese central control system in the Silla government at this time indicates this trend toward centralization.² We also find a royal legacy of 681 recognizing a constant need to modify the old laws to be congruous with the changing conditions of the kingdom.³ It is significant that this recognition was contained in the will of King Pöb-min, whose reign saw the completion of the unification. All this suggests the official attempts to centralize political power in Silla after the unification.

Surprisingly, another cause for the centralization was provided by the manifestation of T'ang territorial ambition during the wars of the unification. To prepare herself for the effective resistance against the T'ang design, Silla appears to have embarked for a course which called for increasing political centralization. The decentralized local political forces in Silla were ready to submit themselves to the central authority in the face of new national threat. The system of the sangsuri first appeared in Silla around this time. Under this system, as we have noted earlier, each local official was required, on a rotating basis, to come to the capital to serve in the various agencies of the central government. The measure might have been an old practice, now extended and modified on the national scale

²For example, the Censorate was introduced in Silla in 667 although its name never reappears in the extant Silla sources.

³SS 7:20b.

to strengthen the central government.

The century following the unification, therefore, saw a steady trend toward strengthening the central authority, but in the end this was crippled by the stubborn resistance of the great nobles whose interest called for the preservation of a decentralized rule. The foes of the centralization seem to have waged a long and bitter war against the abolition of enfiefment (ogŭp) system. The system was first abolished in 689 and this was replaced by the annual payment of the emolument in kind. The change was brought, however, with much caution. Thus the new measure resulted in no change in the actual income of the former fief-holders. The amount of their emolument was to be the same as their earlier income. However, the measure represented a victory for supporters of the centralization; it enabled the central authority to control the official income.

Evidence of their victory is also found in a revealing incident in 701. The incident involved corporal punishment of one hundred floggings and political banishment for a local official, who held the position of the viceroy (T'aesu) and the seventh grade rank, for seeking personal profit at the cost of public welfare.⁴ Although the source does not reveal the exact nature of his selfish profit-seeking activities, the significance of this indictment is very clear: the activities of the local administrator now became accountable to the central authority. Undoubtedly the incident reveals an unprecedented rise in the central government's power to control local officials.

⁴SS 8:7b f.

By 722, the central authority appears to have extended its control over the population in the local areas through the introduction of land allotment in imitation of the T'ang Chün-t'ien system. Although the picture of the land allotment in Silla is far from clear, the rudimentary records still extant show the existence of a systematic registration of land and population every three years in the villages.⁵ The regularity and uniformity of this registration suggests the existence of a centrally coordinated effort to control the local affairs.

The centralization of political authority was accompanied by the active promotion of Confucian studies among the aristocracy. In 682 Silla founded a Confucian college modeled after the similar T'ang institution. The teaching staff was manned by Sillan scholars, and students were drawn from the aristocratic youth of from 15 to 30 se (sui in Chinese) age group holding the rank of the twelfth grade or below including those yet to be admitted to the official hierarchy. The completion of the college course, which could be achieved in a maximum of nine years, conferred the tenth or eleventh grade rank. The curricula of the college consisted of Confucian studies and mathematics, with medicine added later. The Confucian studies offered the Lun-yü and Hsiao-ching as requirements and the Chou-i, Shang-shu, Mao-shih, Li-chi, Ch'un-ch'u-tso-chüan, and Wen-hsien, as electives from which students were to select two. It is difficult to measure the extent to which the study of these Confucian classics materially helped indoctrinate the students with the ideology of the

⁵Yi Pyöng-do and Kim Che-wön, Hanguksa--Sangdae-p'yön (Seoul: Chindan-hakhoe, 1959), pp. 646-650.

autocratic monarchism. Although the contemporary literature is often plastered with Confucian expressions, how much of this is a reflection of the actual thinking of the Silla aristocracy is open to question. What is certain is that the central government actively promoted the Confucian education. It provided financial support to the students in the Confucian college; and it sponsored students going to China to study. The number of students annually going to T'ang may be estimated by the fact that in 840 alone one hundred and five Sillan students were sent back home by the T'ang government because they had used up their years of residence at the T'ang Kuo-hsüeh.⁶ The fresh knowledge of the T'ang government system which these students brought home with them after years of study seems to have been quick in producing some tangible result in the capital. Their effect was apparent in the belated attempt in 788 to introduce the knowledge of Confucian classics as a basis for official promotion and appointment in Silla. But the attempt failed to produce any real change in the aristocratic character of the Silla officialdom.

Although close contact with the T'ang culture was maintained without interruption, the Sillan imitation of the Chinese ideology and government system remained but nominal and piecemeal. The political life of the kingdom was still very much geared to the old indigenous system. The great nobles of Silla in particular had to be convinced of the need to scrap the old system in favor of the political centralization. They

⁶SS 11:1b.

apparently knew such a change would reduce their political power by subjecting them increasingly to the authority of the central government. Significantly when the reversal of the trend toward centralization came, it first appeared through restoration of the old *nogŭp* system in 757. We are left in the dark as to the immediate cause of this sudden reversal of policy. But the time seems to have been ideal for a resurgence of the old oligarchical force, since it was not just a historical coincidence that this sudden abolition of the official emolument system was put into effect when the T'ang empire was engulfed in turmoil over the famous An Lu-shan rebellion. The rebellion in China, indeed, seems to have provided a long-awaited opportunity for the old regional forces to put an end to the centralization which they had so far reluctantly tolerated because of the fear of weakening the nation's unity and, thus, inviting the Chinese to revive their unfulfilled ambition in Korea.

The centralization came to an end in all practicality with the reintroduction of the *nogŭp*. It is true that a large scale reintroduction of the T'ang nomenclature in the Sillan government was again attempted in 769. But the whole thing was abandoned a few years later. On the other hand, the attempt to revive the old indigenous political institutions proved to be just as futile. The drastically altered conditions of eighth-century Silla found little use for the outworn old political institutions without modification. The attempt soon exposed its own contradictions to the surface, leaving Silla in a political chaos. The history of Silla from this time on to its

final fall in 935 was a history of continuous conflicts among the great nobles.

The sources of these contradictions and conflicts had been in the making ever since Silla committed herself to the policy of expansion for the sake of its own survival. Foremost among these causes were the vast populace, territory, and other riches which victory had brought to Silla. The extant sources unfortunately do not provide a full account of their disposal. But it is not difficult to conjecture where they went, even on the basis of rudimentary evidence: all the war spoils eventually fell into the hands of the great warrior nobles. During the wars of the unification, General Kim Yu-sin, for example, received on one occasion a fief (sigŭp) of five hundred households and a land grant of 500 kyŏl. In addition, on many other occasions, he was also the recipient of unspecified amounts of land, slaves, horses, and other treasures which must have given him control over a vast area and a large population.⁷ Many of the names (or official titles) listed as the recipients of these war rewards were inevitably those of high ranking, royal Bone warriors. Usually the amount of their rewards corresponded directly to their rank, thus widening the gap between the wealthy and the poor, and the powerful and the weak. However, there was a remarkable absence of squabble over the disposal for a while. It may be that the distribution was executed in accordance with the accepted system of inequity. The effect of the inequity, however, was destined to increase

⁷ SS 6:4a, 11ab, 14a; 42:9b; 43:2b.

the potential source of conflicts among the Silla nobles. The increasing authority of the crown as the nominal grantee of these war prizes was adding more flame to the conflicts. All of these in time began to threaten the balance of power among the great nobles. In other words, the increasing disparity in wealth, power, and prestige among the great nobles, as well as the corresponding increase in the power of the monarch, all resulted in the intensification of the power struggle among them.

The unification also saw a rapid numerical increase in the Silla aristocratic membership. The increase was due, first of all to the natural growth in the Silla aristocracy itself; secondly, it resulted from the absorption of parts of the Paekche and Koguryŏ aristocracy, and other minor tribes.⁸ The numerical increase in the Sillan aristocracy apparently gained momentum in the peaceful years after unification and added increasing burdens to the demand for offices and lands.⁹ The strain on the limited resources became even worse as Silla had to provide the office and the accompanying economic provisions to the absorbed Paekche and Koguryŏ aristocrats who were given the ranks of Silla noble Bones. It is not difficult to imagine that their numerical increases and the existence of alien members in the aristocracy complicated the situation and increased tension and conflicts in Silla.

The unification finally saw the old stabilizing force, Buddhism, turning into a new spiritual assistance to the aug-

⁸SS 40:12ab.

⁹The Samgugyusa notes the existence of ninety-six holders of the first grade rank in 768. SY 2:12a.

mentation of conflicts. The Buddhist clergy had been richly rewarded by the government for their "realization" of divine protection in the wars of unification. Their service was considered by the Sillanese as real and essential for the welfare and the security of the country. But the disappearance of the unity among the great nobles turned the common protector, Buddha, into the patron of individual interests. The great nobles in time of open conflict sought the service of the Buddhist clergy to enhance the divine protection of Buddha and Budhisattva for their personal ambition. They competed with each other by making greater donations of lands and other treasures to Buddhist temples or by erecting personally sponsored temples. In the capital and in the provinces, Buddhist temples rose like castles of great warring nobles to protect their position of power. The belated attempt of the court to halt unrestrained erection of temples and other extravagant religious indulgence by the rich individual patrons, did not seem to produce any material result. Instead, Buddhism remained an important factor to accentuate the rivalries among the great nobles.

The conflict of interest among the great nobles finally broke the political equilibrium among the Silla leaders. In the absence of the cohesive force, the independent great nobles could neither work together to promote their common interests nor could they create unity in the nation. More powerful nobles found it easier to resort to force in order to attain their selfish ends. Under the circumstances, the Hwabaek decision could neither claim a genuine unanimity, nor carry its

binding force, and it could no longer command the respect of powerful nobles unless it was backed up by naked force. The great nobles no longer could maintain political harmony among themselves. Resort to force and political expedience became the order of the day.

The period of open conflicts among the great nobles was introduced in 768 by a thirty-three day siege of the palace by the armies of two disgruntled aristocratic brothers. Immediate causes for the siege are nowhere revealed in the existing sources, but its political nature and its long-run implications are easy to detect. The uprising was the first of a series of forceful confrontations by the independent-minded great nobles to reverse the steady trend toward monarchical centralism.¹⁰ A show-down such as this eventually forced the reversal of the centralization and a resurgence of the independent powers of the great nobles ensued.

The pattern of political struggle, as revealed in these confrontations, had two points which were characteristic of the period. One, the power struggle was waged by the ranking nobles of the royal Bones; two, the family grouping substituted the Bone grouping as the principal political unit. The political reality of the time demanded a more realistic political unit than the rapidly disintegrating Bone unity. The natural answer was a social unit based on a common ancestry. The clan, therefore, substituted the Bone as the basic political unit in Silla.

¹⁰Yi Ki-baek, "Silla Hyegong-wangdae ūi Chōngchi'i-jōk Pyōnhŏk," Sahoegwahak, Vol. II (Mar., 1948), pp. 75-98.

On the other hand, the breakdown of the Bone solidarity was a result of the increasing conflicts of interests among the members of the aristocracy, particularly those of the Chingol; This was not as a result of successful challenge against the kolp'um system by any social class. Political struggle was largely confined among the aristocratic ranks. For example, the four insurrections, which occurred during the last ten years of King Kon-un's (Hyegong wang) reign (765-780), were all organized by high ranking nobles of the royal Bone, and they were not revolutionary insurrections to change social order in Silla. In other words, the Sillan maxim that the Bone status is the basis of power was never a bona-fide contention in the political struggle, but was faithfully accepted by all. Therefore the kolp'um system was maintained in Silla even after political disorder set in. Chang po-go, a fabulous maritime merchant prince, for instance, could not break in the Sillan social barrier in spite of the fact that his power was so strong that it made him a king-maker in Silla at that time. Why did he fail to break through the Sillan social barrier? How was it possible for him to make the attempt in the first place, and why did the Silla aristocracy reject him? Chang po-go provides a rare and significant historical case for the examination of the stubbornly persistent social order in Silla at a time when the kingdom was steadily slipping into a fateful political disintegration.

The Preservation of the Kolp'um System

Chang po-go was an adventurous maritime merchant prince

who had established power for himself and a fortune while living in T'ang China, but he lost them in Silla. Although he gained fame in China, he was a Korean descendant from Silla. We know very little about his actual family background except that he was born of a rather low social class around the turn of the ninth century.¹¹ Although he possessed unusual talent as a warrior, he did not seem to obtain an opportunity to test it until he came to China and joined a local army. He rose rapidly as a soldier in the Wu-ning army of the Hsü-chou area. His rise might have been due to his ability to control the large Korean settlements in the lower Huai River and southern Shantung areas. These areas were the bases of the Koreans in China who were active in the thriving triangular trade between China, Japan, and Korea. His control of these communities obviously led him to build a powerful merchant fleet which commanded the lucrative maritime trade across the East China Sea, then dominated by Korean traders. The basis of his power, therefore, was the naval fleet which controlled the overseas trade. At the same time, it should be noted that he also rose as a military lieutenant in the Chinese army, and he built his power outside of the Silla territory. This provided him during his ascendancy to power and fame with immunity from the obstruction of the Silla social barrier. Consequently, when he moved back to Silla, his power and fame were already well established facts and the Silla government was forced to acquiesce his

¹¹For a study on him and his activities, see: Kim Sang-gi, "Kodae ūi Muyōk-hyōngt'ae wa Na-mal ūi Haesang Palchon e Ch'wi hayō" Chindan-hakpo, Vols. I and II (Nov., 1934 and April, 1935) pp. 86-112 and 115-133.

de facto power position by accommodating it in the Silla power structure. The occasion of his return, though not completely clear in the sources, aids toward understanding his unusual position in Silla.

The real motive behind his return to Korea seems to have been his desire to find a new place to station his headquarters, for which the islands off the southeast coast of the peninsula offered the best possibilities. From these islands he could maintain a more effective control over the thriving triangle maritime trade. Ostensibly he came, however, to offer his patriotic service to check the slave traffic between Korea and China. The offer fitted rather well to the need of the time because the Chinese imperial government then manifested some concern over the traffic. Furthermore, we have reason to believe that Chang's request was officially backed up by the imperial government.¹² Whether or not his real motive was known to the Silla government matters little; for it appears that he hardly needed any excuse to have the Silla government grant his request, since his navy was sufficiently powerful to gain his wishes through threatened force. The impression which his military strength left on the Silla government is indicated by the flight of Prince U-jing, (who at the time of Chang's request occupied the important post of the Chief Minister, Sijung) to Chang's new headquarters in search of military aid to avenge his political foe when he met defeat in a

¹²Tamai Yoshihiro, "Tō-jidai no Gaikoku-do--Toku-ni Shiragi-do ni Tsuite," Oda-sensei Shōju-kinen Chōsen-ronshū (Keijo, 1934), pp. 695-722.

power struggle.

In any event, the Silla government granted Chang's request in 828 and conferred upon him the title of the Commissioner (Taesa); it granted him permission to set up his base with a ten thousand-man force on the island of Ch'ŏnghaejin (present Kwando). His official duty was to guard the Korean coast to check the slave traffic. In Silla a position of this importance, especially with such a large number of troops under its command, would never under ordinary circumstances be filled by a man of such obscure social origins as Chang. His appointment had no precedent therefore and, in fact, was in violation of the established rule for official appointments in Silla. The unprecedented nature of Chang's appointment was in part expressed in the unusual title conferred upon him. One fails to find the title Taesa used in any other occasion in Silla up until this time. By the early ninth century, the power of the Silla kingdom had so declined that it had to acquiesce the existence of a formidable private army built and commanded by a man of obviously low birth and, moreover, it had to give its blessing by conferring an official title upon him. By so doing, Silla made a fateful breach of a principle of vital importance to the kingdom--it violated the kolp'um rule.

Because of the unconstitutionality of his power, Chang po-go stood as an ominous sign for the social order upon which the Silla ruling class found the legitimacy of its power. The Silla aristocrats were not slow in discerning the imminent danger posed by Chang to their special privilege; but, infested as they were by internal dissensions, they were unable to gather

enough strength to prevent his appointment, and even less to destroy his unconstitutional possession of military and economic power. As long as his power was confined to the island and did not extend beyond the control of the maritime commerce itself, he was deemed no real threat to their security. After all, the resources from which they drew their economic basis of power still remained in the land mass, since wealth was mainly drawn from agricultural productions not from commerce. But when he was drawn into the battle of their power struggle, and when he made a bid to enter their sacred circle, immediately he became a real menace that had to be destroyed or the basis of their power and the constitution of the kingdom would be lost.

The events that caused Chang to become a king-maker, and also brought about his subsequent and violent death, began in 837, when Prince U-jing, after an unsuccessful attempt to put his father on the throne, fled to Chang for protection and assistance. In the following year, when the prince's arch-enemy, Prince Myōng, murdered the king (whom Myōng had previously put on the throne), proclaiming himself the successor, Chang decided at Prince U-jing's urging to dispatch a part of his troops, about five thousand in number, to attack the usurper in the Silla capital. Chang's army, after it won the decisive battle against the royal force in the vicinity of present Taegu, swarmed into the capital and killed the usurper, and put Prince U-jing on the throne in 839. The new King U-jing (Sin-mu wang) rewarded Chang with the generous grant of a sigūp of two thousand households and the title of the Commissioner of the

Righteous Army (Kamigunsa).

King U-jing, however, did not live long enough to carry out the important promise he had made to Chang: that he would take the latter's daughter as a second wife (whether for himself or his son, the Crown Prince, is not clear) when he became the king. When King U-jing passed away after less than four months on the throne, the Crown Prince succeeded his father. On ascending the throne, the young king conferred upon Chang the more formal title of Commanding General of Ch'ŏnghae (Ch'ŏnghae-janggun), a move which unmistakably denotes his formal admission to the Silla aristocracy. This unprecedented conferral of the general's title on the non-aristocrat Chang must have alarmed the status-conscious Silla aristocrats. When the question of accepting Chang's daughter as the number two queen arose, a strong opposition came from the great nobles of Silla. They indignantly pointed out that Chang was only "an islander"; and "how could his daughter be assigned to the king's chamber?"¹³ The implication of the opposition is clear: no daughter of "the islander's" Bone qualification should be allowed to marry the king and change the sacred blood of the royal Bone. Under the Silla constitution mere possession of merits, talents, wealth, and even the possession of a powerful military force, as in the case of Chang, should not automatically qualify a person for membership in the royal Bone unless he had inherited the blood qualifications. The proposed marriage, if carried out, would

¹³SS 11:2ab.

certainly violate the constitution of the kingdom and would destroy the basis of the kolp'um system. The defense of the kolp'um system, in other words, was a mandatory call for the preservation of special privileges which the system invincibly guaranteed for the Silla aristocracy--especially for the great nobles. Naturally it was their duty to defend the system and the aristocratic privileges by preventing the proposed marriage. It was feared in the capital that Chang might not accept the decision of the Council of State and would protest; therefore, the decision also called for action to get rid of Chang as soon as possible.

The one who volunteered to be the assassin was Yöm Chang, one of Chang's own lieutenants who led the campaign against the usurper Myöng. Pretending to be a faithful and loyal lieutenant for the rejected and resentful Chang, so we are told, Yöm succeeded in completely duping his master and taking his life while exchanging cups of a friendly drink.¹⁴ What had happened to Chang's force and merchant fleet after his sudden death is not clear. We know, however, that one of his loyal lieutenants tried to resist but was quickly subdued by Yöm's troop, and the territory under Chang's command went to Yöm's control in reward. We also know that Yöm sent a special emissary to Japan to request of the Japanese authorities the extradition of Chang's followers who had fled there.¹⁵ These fragments of information

¹⁴Scholars disagree on the year of Chang's assassination placing it somewhere between 840 and 845, instead of 846 as given in the Samguksagi. See Okada's article cited below.

¹⁵Okada Masayuki, "Jikaku-taishi no Nyütō-kikō ni Tsuite," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. XIII. No. 1 (May, 1923), pp. 23-28; and Imanishi, op. cit., pp. 321-328.

indicate the disintegration or the transfer of Chang's forces to other commands after his sudden death. The mysterious silence about the aftermath of the once fabulous empire only strengthens the impression that his powerful position had no deep roots in the Silla society, and apparently it quietly disintegrated after a fatal blow was dealt to its leader. It also suggests the strength of the kolp'um system which had its deep roots in the fabrics of Silla society.

The story of Chang's life shows that Silla had to accommodate, even as a temporary measure, a man of lower social origin who had risen to a position of power while abroad. More significantly, it shows that the Silla kolp'um system demonstrated its persistence and vitality. In fact, the Sillan social order was so well fused in the fabrics of Korean society that it outlived the Silla aristocracy itself. To be sure, the institutionalized form of the kolp'um system which supported the absolute supremacy of the royal Bone in Silla disappeared with the fall of the Silla kingdom. But the social order of the kolp'um system was preserved in the basic social structure of Korea even after the fall of Silla. Yet, after all these things are mentioned, one still can say that the precedent set up by Chang in his bid to break through the supposedly unsurmountable social barrier was to become a source of inspiration for the social outcasts of later times who made efforts to succeed where Chang had failed.

At the same time, it should be noted that Chang himself, though he came from a lower class, did not seem to have manifested any open antagonism, political or social, against the

kolp'um system itself, at least, not until he was rejected by the Silla aristocracy in the end. As a matter of fact, evidence indicates rather his willingness to accept the Sillan social order. His own admission into the membership of the aristocracy is one such indication. His hope and optimism about the possibility of entering the tight royal Bone membership by means of his own strength and talent are other such indications. His hope and optimism could be attributed to his early experiences in T'ang China where it was possible for him to rise relatively high in the social ladder, not by inheritance, but by his own proven skill. When he had learned his bitter lesson that it was different in Silla, it was too late for him. But he obviously left an important lesson for the men of his caliber who came after him. The later outlaws, one of whom we shall take up next, held quite different attitudes toward the aristocracy and the kolp'um system.

Challenge and Response

Between the eighth and ninth centuries the political situation in the Silla kingdom turned from bad to worse. Widespread social unrest was rapidly transformed into violent uprisings, while in the capital the great nobles found themselves hopelessly entangled in the seemingly endless struggle for power. During the eighth century Silla had seven kings, but in the following century she changed kings thirteen times and several of them met their death violently in the bloody power struggle. Using their own private armies, the powerful nobles contended

with each other for political supremacy in the rapidly declining kingdom. Turned loose in a realm of political intrigues, fighting for personal power, most of them seem to have lost sight of true perspectives.

General political disorder and economic deterioration tended to increase social unrest even among the lower classes in the kingdom. The extravagant expenditures for building many glittering temples and indulging in the excessive luxuries of aristocratic life forced the government to extract from the people taxes far heavier than they could possibly bear. Peasants and slaves, hard pressed and driven to desperation, openly defied the unscrupulous officials by refusing to comply to their ever-increasing demands and resorted to violence in protest against the unbearable burden on their already empty pockets.

By 890, disorder had spread over great parts of the kingdom. Open defiance and uprisings limited the government's authority to its immediate vicinity. Men of ambition and foresight began to capitalize on the situation by transforming the general unrest and discontent into organized rebellion against the government. Few of these men were actually from lower classes; they were predominantly from the discontented elements of the aristocracy. Many of them were articulate aristocrats who were disillusioned by the decadence of the aristocratic society and turned their back upon the government which was plagued by the power struggle of great nobles. Their revolt was often motivated by their desire for reform in the government. Their exposure to the Chinese political thought clearly set the intellectual background for their own revolt. The

social and political unrest, which plagued their society, also deprived their confidence in the values of their old indigenous political system. Their aggravating disillusion in the indigenous values and their intellectual orientation toward Confucian ideology necessarily disposed them to aspire more and more for a new political order inspired from the Chinese political system. The futile attempts to re-organize the Silla government in imitation of the T'ang government system in 759 and to introduce a modified form of the Chinese civil service examination system in 788 were early manifestations of these aspirations. Despite these early failures, the aspirations became increasingly greater as the indigenous political system showed increasing signs of dissolution through the exposition of internal contradictions. In the late days of Silla the aspirations found the best expression through the writings of Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn, the most renowned scholar of late Silla. We shall pause here to examine briefly the man and his political philosophy so as to gain insight into the main current of thought in Silla at the time.

Born to an aristocratic family, which seems to have had the Yuktup'um status, he was sent to China at an early age of 12 to obtain an education. In 874, only six years later, he passed the T'ang civil service examination with a top score. Subsequently, he received official appointments by the T'ang government to serve in both local and central government in China. At the time of the Huang Ch'ao rebellion, he worked under Kao P'ien, the commander of the T'ang royal forces, and wrote many of the latter's proclamations, including the famous

T'ao Huang Ch'ao hsi-wen. His literary talent seems to have been widely acclaimed by the T'ang literary circles. The I-wen-chih of the Hsin-T'ang-shu records the existence of his works in China while the Samguksagi takes notes of his friendship with T'ang poets Lo Yin and Ku Yun. In 885, though he reportedly received the imperial appointment as the Hanlin Academician and the royal tutor by T'ang Hsi-tsung (874-889), he seems to have declined the appointment and returned to Korea.

After his return, evidence indicated that he made unsuccessful attempts to institute reforms in the Silla government to revitalize the rapidly declining kingdom. In 894, after the favorable reception of his ten point reform proposal by the Silla Queen, he received the sixth grade rank in the Silla official hierarchy--a probable indication of his Bone-rank. Although the contents of his reform proposal are not known to us, it is probably safe to assume that their main ideas were drawn from his experience in China, where talent and education were the basis of official appointment, and that they would have been objectionable to the vested interests of the great nobles. In support of these assumptions, one can point out the existence at this time of considerable discontent among men of letters in Silla who were unable to get appointments in the government in spite of their scholarly accomplishments.¹⁶ It is no wonder then that Ch'oe had to abandon his reform effort in the face of effective obstruction by the great nobles and took a local position of the viceroy. He does not seem,

¹⁶SS 11:13ab.

however, to have remained for long even in this local position, probably because of the spreading rebellion which made an ordered administration of the local government impossible. He subsequently retired from the public life and mainly engaged in teaching and writing. His early retirement seems, in part, to have been prompted by the desire to continue his reform effort through another channel--education. He is credited by the Koryŏ court historians for producing many disciples who later worked in important capacities for the founding of the new Koryŏ dynasty.¹⁷ It was in the capacity of an educator and famed writer that Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn seems to have contributed most in building the new political order for Korea.

His writing was concerned primarily with reinterpreting the old indigenous institutions in terms of the Chinese concepts. This is evident in the two fragments which have been preserved in the Sam guksagi. One of these fragments comes from the chronological table of the Silla rulers which Ch'oe compiled. Even though the actual table has now been lost, the compiler of Samguksagi who had access to the table cites the fact that Ch'oe had substituted the native words for early Silla rulers with the Chinese word for the king, wang, in the work, and the Samguksagi makes comments that the substitution might have been due to the inferior value Ch'oe attached to the native expressions.¹⁸ The native expressions in this case were the Kŏsŏkan (the first ruler), the ch'ach'aung (the second ruler),

¹⁷SS 46:6b-7a.

¹⁸SS 4:1b.

the Nisagūm (from the third to the eighteenth rulers) and the Maripkan (from the nineteenth to the twenty-second rulers). Written in the Idu style they all meant either the tribal chieftain or the great chieftain with the exception of the ch'ach'-aung, which probably meant a shaman.¹⁹ To substitute these native expressions with the Chinese character, wang, is obviously a gross misrepresentation in meaning, and it indicates his sinophilist inclination to replace the indigenous concepts with the Chinese.

This sinophilist attitude is more explicitly shown in his explanation of the indigenous Hwarang-do. "Our country," he says, "has a deeply profound way called the way of the Hawrang (P'ungnyu). The origin of its teaching is described in detail in the history of the Hwarang (Sōnsa). Actually, it contains three teachings to influence the people. They are: one, to be a filial son at home and to be loyal to the country (these are the ideas of Confucius); two, to practice the principle of non-action and the teaching of the quietism (this is the doctrine of Lao-tzu); and, three, to avoid all evils and to do all good (these are the creed of the Buddha)."²⁰ Here again, in sweeping generalization he explained what was a purely indigenous institution in purely Chinese terminology. In so doing, he not only singularly failed to explain the institution but also callously falsified the meaning of the institution which had an important

¹⁹ Idu was used to transliterate Korean in Chinese characters using their phonetic and ideographic values. Shiratori Kurakichi, "Chōsen Kodai Ōgō," Shigaku-zasshi, Vol. VII, No. 2 (Feb., 1896), pp. 26-44; and Yi and Kim, op. cit., pp. 374-375.

²⁰SS 4:10b f.

function in the preservation of the aristocratic order of Silla. As we have seen before, the Hwarang-do was the training institution of the aristocratic children, and as such, it had incorporated in its program the indoctrination of the fundamental ideals of the Silla aristocracy into the future leaders. We may safely conclude from the above two cases that the sinophilist attitude of Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn generally tended to superannuate the meaning of the indigenous institutions through his artificial imposition of the alien concepts upon them.

Such superannuation of the indigenous institutions had in time produced some far-reaching consequences which had direct bearing on the early Koryŏ political system. The attitude taken by the sinophilist writers like Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn quickly spread among the discontented Silla aristocrats. Later it became a commonly held view of the educated in Korea. The acceptance of such attitudes by the educated was indirectly expressed in their renunciation of the Idu letters as the writing system.²¹ The Idu as the only system of transcribing Korean facilitated the correct description of the native political concept and made their preservation possible. How important this was in the development of the Korean political ideas is attested by Professor George Sansom's eloquent treatment of a similar case in the Japanese history. "Perhaps too little weight," he says, "is given to mere language as an essential factor in the growth of political ideas. Under a highly developed system of govern-

²¹Peter H. Lee, "Popular Poems in the Koryŏ Dynasty as Described in the Koryŏsa and Akchang-kasa," Oriens Extremus, Vol. II (5 Jahrgang 1958), pp. 203-4.

ment there are occasions when the limitations of language may hinder the correct treatment of a problem, because many situations are falsified by the mere attempt to describe them; but for the settlement of forms of administration in its early stages the precision of a written instrument is probably essential."²²

The later disuse of the Idu compelled Koreans in Koryō to depend completely on the Chinese written language as their sole means of written expression. Such dependence, to be sure, considerably eased the problem of absorbing Chinese thought and institutions by Koreans; but it was also responsible for the gross falsification of the native ideas and institutions in the process.

The first known attempt to break away from the Silla kolp'um system was registered by the short-lived T'aebong kingdom (901-918). The founder of T'aebong, Kim Kung-ye, avowed to destroy the Silla kingdom even though he was born as the bastard son of a Silla king. Whether or not his policy specifically included deliberate destruction of the kolp'um system is not known, but he did disregard this system in creating ad hoc machinery for his government. It is hoped that an examination of circumstances surrounding his rise and fall will reveal his attitude toward the social order of Silla based on the kolp'um system.

From the time he was born, Kung-ye was rejected by his own father because, we are told, his birth was occasioned by a bad

²²George B. Sansom, Japan--A Short Cultural History, (rev. ed.: New York, 1943), p. 78f.

omen. But a more practical reason for his rejection probably was that he was born to a woman whose Bone status should have excluded, under the kolp'um rule, her chance of becoming a royal consort. Miraculously, so the story continues, he was rescued by his wet nurse from the hands of an assassin sent by his own father but only after he had lost one eye. Thereafter he was raised secretly by his nurse. When he reached his boyhood, he was once chided by the nurse for being a bully and he heard her expressing fear that should his misbehavior unwittingly reveal his true identity, it would surely cost them their lives.

Shocked and grief stricken upon learning of his cursed past, he resolved in the end to enter a monastery to become a Buddhist monk. But even in the monastery, we are told, his restless nature found little comfort. This time, he decided to join a rebel group. Apparently his ambition found little fulfillment in a monastic life. Besides, many men of ambition at the time were finding in the prevailing discontent of the populace an opportunity for power and wealth.

Kung-ye, ambitious and vehemently resentful of the Silla aristocracy for their past rejection of him, could not sit idly by and let the golden opportunity of revenge pass. His decision to join the rebellion, it seems, was also prompted by the prospect which his noble birth held for him in such a movement.²³ He first joined a gang led by Ki-hwŏn in 891. But he failed to get treatment worthy of his noble birth; and in the following year, we are told, he left Ki-hwŏn in disgust with the latter's

²³SS 50:1b-2a.

"arrogance and lack of propriety" joining instead the force of Yang-gil in Wŏnju. In Yang-gil, he seems to have found a ready ear to accept his worthy birth, because he is said to have won Yang-gil's confidence and was picked out as one of the leaders in the latter's camp.

While helping Yang-gil, he did not neglect to build up his own force. Each successful raid he led against Silla outposts added more followers for him. By 894, he had mastered enough men for himself to be the leader of over 3500 armed men. He left Yang-gil and began to consolidate his power by establishing his headquarters in present Kangnung on the east coast. From there he rigorously pushed toward the west to expand his territory and to strengthen his military power. This he did in such speed that within a year he began to organize his own government and to address himself with the title of a lord (Kun)--the title which his princely birth should have justified. As Kung-ye grew stronger, an increasing number of restless local Silla officials came to Kung-ye and voluntarily submitted themselves to his authority, seeking protection. Among them was Wang Yung, a local Silla official of Songak-Kun (present Kaesong), whose son, Kŏn, later was to found a dynasty of his own after a successful coup against Kung-ye.

By 899 Kung-ye became sufficiently strong to attack even the force of his former leader Yang-gil. After moving his headquarters to Songak on the west coast, he emerged as the master of central Korea. Thereupon, he conferred upon himself the title of king, thus formally founding his own kingdom. He then vowed himself to revenge against Silla. Interestingly, the

kingdom he claimed that he had just restored was the fallen kingdom of Koguryō, which was annexed by Silla with the aid of the T'ang army as we have seen. No doubt, he was merely using the name of the once-powerful kingdom for his own political purpose which was derived mainly from his personal feeling against Silla. His bitter personal feeling is shown in his burning hostility against Silla. On one occasion, for example, while stopping over at a famous Buddhist temple at Yōngju (present P'unggi), he saw a portrait of a Silla king hanging on the wall. In a fit of rage he drew his sword and cut the portrait to pieces, and before the surprised attendants, he declared himself the king of all the territories including Silla. Thereafter, he gave orders to call the Silla capital as "the fallen capital" and to execute all Silla officials who came to surrender. This episode portrays Kung-ye as a man who was intensely emotional, so much so that once his pent emotion found an outlet, he could hardly maintain a semblance of sanity. In fact, his emotional instability in the end cost him dearly--the price he paid was the loss of the new kingdom he had founded.

Notwithstanding, he had introduced a number of interesting innovations in his short-lived kingdom, some of which were retained by Wang Kōn into Koryō.²⁴ Most significantly, the social composition of T'aebong officials marked a considerable departure from the kolp'um system of Silla. Although he had retained

²⁴The new rank system of T'aebong, for example, was still in use during the early days of Koryō along with the Silla rank titles. Chōng Im-ji and others, Koryōsa (Kukko-ch'onggan I, Seoul: Tongbanghak-yōnguso, Yōnhi University, 1955), 77:45a, (Hereafter KRS.)

some of the Silla titles in his government, official rank in T'aebong was no longer determined by birth alone, as it was in Silla.²⁵ Talent apparently became a new qualification for the social advancement in T'aebong. We know, for example, some of his generals, before they joined the rebellion, were engaged in professions which belonged to lower classes in Silla.²⁶

This, of course, does not necessarily mean that he had departed completely from the Silla social order. Although judging from the bitter resentment he held against Silla, one would think that he should have wished no part of the Silla aristocratic order for him or his new kingdom. Evidence, however, does not support this. On the contrary, he himself seems to have capitalized upon his own noble birth to build up his authority. He obviously knew that his noble birth still commanded reverence among the people still bound by the conventions of the Silla society. He also employed in his staff former members of the Silla aristocracy. Among the known names of his officials Ch'oe Ung and Wang Yu, not to mention numerous military aids, undoubtedly came from Silla aristocratic rank. They were among those who had defected from the ranks of the Silla aristocracy and joined the rebellion to lend its leaders their scholarly and administrative skill. It is also true, however, that Kung-ye failed to make full use of all available

²⁵While serving under Kung-ye, for instance, Wang Kōn, who had no part of the Silla royal blood, had reached to the rank of p'ajinch'an, which as the fourth grade was a royal Bone rank in Silla. KRS 1:4a.

²⁶I Hūn-ām, one of Kung-ye's generals, was a trader of archery and horse before he joined Kung-ye. KRS 127:2b.

Silla aristocratic talents, largely because of his personal dislike for the Silla aristocracy. At times, he summarily massacred even those Silla officials who showed willingness to submit themselves to his authority.

Kung-ye was far more aggressive and fanatical than the Silla kings in making use of Buddhism for his political ends. Whereas no Silla king attempted to claim Buddhahood for himself in any time, Kung-ye late in his rule started to call himself Maitreya Buddha and his two sons Budhisattvas in an obvious attempt to fortify his rule with divine authority. His biographer in the Samguksagi tells us that whenever he went out he clad himself with a monk's robe wearing a golden conical cap on his head and rode on a white horse, preceded by lines of children carrying banners, canopies, flowers, and burning incense, and followed by two hundred bhiksus chanting Buddhist hymns.²⁷ He is also said to have written twenty kwŏn (chuans in Chinese) of Buddhist canon and lectured on them. When a Buddhist monk, Sŏk-ch'ong, repudiated his work as heresy, he bludgeoned the monk to death on the spot. These stories illustrate his attempt to introduce crude theocracy in T'aebong. His knowledge of Buddhism is apparently traceable to his earlier training at a Buddhist monastery; but his immediate cause for resorting to theocracy seems to have been the need to sanctify his rule with the divine power of the Buddha. This was required to fend off the growing insecurity which he was beginning to feel under the mounting evidence of conspiracy among his followers against

²⁷ SS 50:4b.

his rule.

The probable cause which turned his followers against him might have been his violent and unpredictable character that made his rule tyrannical. The evidence is found in his biography in the Samguksagi. Kung-ye's "wicked character" is described by his biographer in a pitifully tragic drama.²⁸ It is said that once his wife seriously remonstrated with Kung-ye for his "unjust actions." Kung-ye, thinking ill of this, accused her of an illicit relation with another man. He claimed that he knew this through divine revelation. He thereupon scorched her to death with a burning red pestle. His two sons by her also met the same brutal death. After this incident he became even more suspicious of the people around him and he became more ill-tempered, so much so that the same fate was often inflicted upon his officials as well. These brutal and almost insane actions by Kung-ye are given in the Samguksagi as the ultimate cause for his fall. It is interesting to note that if Kung-ye's fall can be attributed to his tyranny and autocracy, then these qualities also stand in total antipathy to the old tradition of the Silla monarchy. In fact, all the points we have made, so far, of the significant features of the T'aebong government run quite contrary to the constitution and tradition of the Silla government. His departure from the kolp'um system, his indifference to the Hwabaek and Hwarang-do tradition, his morbid hatred for the Silla ruling house and his tendency toward theocracy and tyranny would have been sufficient reasons to alienate the Silla aristocratic elements in his government.

²⁸SS 50:5a.

Such alienation is actually indicated in the cases of Wang Yu and Ch'oe Ung, the two Confucian literati we know of in Kung-ye's immediate staff. Wang Yu left Kung-ye because of the latter's misrule, and he refused to serve under Kung-ye and became a recluse. Ch'oe Ung, while remaining in Kung-ye's service, collaborated with Wang Kōn in the plot against Kung-ye.

It does not seem unreasonable to surmise that Kung-ye's heretic tendency in Buddhism only antagonized the Buddhist hierarchy in the country, as partially revealed in the protest of Monk Sōk-ch'ong. The one group which might have remained loyal to Kung-ye was his own army. But the generals under him actually carried out what appears to have been a bloodless coup d'etat against him. A wide-spread discontent in the army is indicated by the fact that no trace of resistance by Kung-ye's loyal troops is registered when the coup was staged. Moreover, as the chancellor and trusted general, Wang Kōn must have been a most reliable man for Kung-ye. But Wang Kōn seems to have done nothing to prevent the fall of his lord. On the contrary, the likelihood of his active involvement in the plot from the very beginning is suggested by one recorded incident. Kung-ye one day summoned Wang Kōn and bluntly told Kōn of his knowledge of the scheme to overthrow Kung-ye. Kung-ye demanded a frank confession on the spot. Wang Kōn, caught by surprise, is said to have narrowly escaped a moment of "deadly peril" by the timely intervention of Ch'oe Ung, who was an attendant on hand, but only after he had frankly accepted the accusation. The incident suggests the possibility of Kung-ye's extreme unpopularity among his followers so that the plot against his rule was open

knowledge at the time.

In the records, however, the actual occurrence of the coup d'etat comes rather suddenly. On the night of July 24, 918, Kung-ye's four generals, Hong Yu, Pae Hyŏn-gyŏn, Sin Sung-gyŏm, and To chi-gyŏm, called on Wang Kŏn at his residence and revealed their plan of the coup at the following dawn. Before they could get Wang Kŏn to agree to their plan, we are told, they first had to persuade him to accept the crown after the successful coup. This Wang Kŏn is said to have repeatedly declined by saying that to do so would be against the way of a subject. The plotters' basic argument was that Kung-ye had already lost the mandate of Heaven because of the moral degeneration of his character, manifested in the killing of his wife, two sons, and the various officials; that people were suffering because of his misrule; that there was no one in the kingdom who was more virtuous and better qualified than Wang Kŏn to become the new king; and that the people wished Wang Kŏn's ascendancy. Wang Kŏn at last conceded to their arguments and gave his consent to their plan. But this was done only after his wife finally intervened and joined the four generals' efforts to persuade him. Thereupon, they solemnly conducted the king-and-subject ceremony. After a quickly staged coup, at sunrise on July 25, 918, Wang Kŏn was crowned as king, and his new dynasty, The Koryŏ, was born amid approving cries of "over ten thousand men" gathered outside the palace gate. The story related above need not be taken at its face value. But what is clearly doubtless is that the blunders committed by Kung-ye in T'aebong had in the final analysis cost him his kingdom.

Because of their valuable position and knowledge, the Silla aristocrats' assistance was imperative in building the foundation of the T'aebong should Kung-ye's endeavor be successful in the end. Any new dynasty which was to succeed the Sillan rule in Korea had, in all likelihood, to be founded on the premise of continuing (not breaking from) the aristocratic order of Silla for no other reason than that the Silla aristocracy was the only class which possessed the knowledge and power necessary for organizing and running a government at the time. The cause of Kung-ye's failure lies in the fact that he attempted to build a government which constituted a break from the Silla tradition. His attempt was destined to fail because he could neither see nor heed to the forces which steered his society. He rose by taking advantage of the conventional norm of his society which acquiesced a position of independent power for a man of his birth, but he fell in the end because he ignored the same norm. His successor, Wang Kōn, was different and stood almost as his opposite on this crucial question. The founder of the Koryō Dynasty made special efforts to make the best use out of all available Silla aristocrats to build the foundation of his new dynasty and to organize his new government. It is hard, however, to exaggerate the importance of Kung-ye's experiment during his short-lived kingdom which provided valuable lessons for Wang Kōn in the difficult task of building a new dynasty in tenth century Korea.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDING OF THE KORYŎ DYNASTY

Wang Kŏn and the Reunification

Wang Kŏn, the son of a local Silla official from commercially important Songak (present Kaesŏng), started his political career under Kung-ye.¹ He rose rapidly in the T'aebong as a brilliant military strategist. He led many successful campaigns against another rising rebel leader, Yi (or Kyŏn) Hwŏn, who proclaimed himself as the king of Hu-baekche in 900. These added to T'aebong many important military outposts of Hu-baekche, just as they strengthened Kŏn's position as one of Kung-ye's leading generals.

¹There are two slightly different accounts of how Wang Kŏn started his career under Kung-ye. One version, which is in the Koryŏsa, assumes that Kŏn was with his father Yung, a holder of the eighth grade Sillan rank and local official of Songak-Kun, when the latter surrendered his district to Kung-ye in 896. According to the Koryŏsa, Kung-ye received Yung with delight and appointed him to the viceroyalty of Kŏmsong. Yung, however, persuaded Kung-ye at this time to make his son, Kŏn, the Sŏngju of Songak, and thus embarked Kŏn's career under Kung-ye. The other version is found in the Samguksagi which says that Wang Kŏn came from Songak by himself--not with his father-- to surrender to Kung-ye and received his first appointment as the Viceroy of Ch'ŏlwŏn-Gun--not as the Sŏngju of Songak--from Kung-ye in 895. The present writer uses the Koryŏsa version. The late Professor Ikeuchi, however, disputed this version and found the other version more dependable. Considering the fact that Kŏn had barely become nineteen in 895 and that Ch'ŏlwŏn became Kung-ye's capital ten years later (in 905), it is very unlikely that Kung-ye would have made a mere nineteen-year-old boy the Viceroy of a potentially important district of Ch'ŏlwŏn. It should also be pointed out that Professor Ikeuchi's argument became even weaker when he disputed the possibility of Yung's holding a Sillan rank and local office in Songak. KRS 1:1b; SS 50:2b; and Ikeuchi Hiroshi, Mansenshi-kenkyū--Chūsei, II (Tokyo, 1937), pp. 8-12.

Kŏn's phenomenal rise under Kung-ye reached a climax when he secured for T'aebong the naval supremacy in the Korean water. In brilliantly conceived strategy Wang Kŏn successfully commanded his naval fleet for an invasion of Hu-baekche's rear in the southwest corner of the peninsula. In place of attacking from the land, Wang Kŏn sailed down the western coastal line in 909 and occupied a few strategic off-shore islands in the southwest corner of the peninsula. From there Wang Kŏn launched an invasion on the Hu-baekche coast and attacked Naju (present Naju), a strategic center for control of the overseas trade in the Yellow Sea. In the end, he took Naju and deprived Kyŏn Hwŏn of this important outlet to the sea. The campaign, certainly one of the most significant sea battles in Korean history, lasted for over three years and gave decisive control of the sea to T'aebong.²

To understand the significance of it one need only recall that Chang Po-go based his headquarters on one of the off-shore islands, which Wang Kŏn had occupied in the battle, and Chang established his headquarters there in order to control the maritime trade on the East China Sea. Consequently, control of the area made it possible for Wang Kŏn to regulate the maritime traffic over the East China Sea and, through this, to secure an important source of finance in order to build up

²The significance of this campaign to the balance of power in Korea is indicated by the fact that the victory occasioned the formal proclamation of the founding of T'aebong and of the adoption of the year-title of Long Live Marine Virtue (Sudŏk Manse) by Kung-ye. SS 50:4b.

his power base.³ No wonder that only two years after Wang Kōn triumphantly returned from his campaign, Kung-ye conferred upon him the rank of the p'ajinch'an and chief councilorship. This apparently was the reflection of the irrefutable position which Kōn had built for himself as a result of his successful campaign and his ultimate control of the sea. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this crucial naval victory in building up his personal power and finally in capturing the crown. It took him only seven years after this victorious campaign or five years after he became Chief Councilor before he could organize a successful coup d'etat against his lord, Kung-ye.

Following the successful coup, Wang Kōn began to organize his government and to consolidate his power. To this end he seems to have actively sought the help of those Silla aristocrats who were willing to serve under him. Evidence shows that Wang Kōn, unlike his predecessor, made all-out efforts to form a political alliance with the Silla aristocracy in order to further his political ends. His military strategy was to keep open the major route linking his capital with the Silla capital and to assist Silla militarily whenever she was under attack of the Hu-baekche. Moreover, he had gathered around himself as his confident advisors men like Ch'oe Ung, Ch'oe On-wi, Wang Yu, Ch'oe Chi'mong, and Ch'oe Sŭng-no who apparently represented the best group of Sillan scholars in

³Hino Kiazaburō, "Ra-matsu Sankoku no Tieritsu to Taidairiku Kaijō-kōtsū-bōeki," Chōsen-gakuhō, Vol. XVII (Oct., 1960), pp. 87-116.

the field of Chinese studies available at that time. Their strong influence over Wang Kōn was shown in two significant ways in his policy toward Silla. One was his constant endeavor to protect the old declining kingdom from the attack of its enemy even while he was pursuing his bid to reunify the peninsula under his rule. The other was his effort to absorb as many features of the Silla government into his new dynasty as situations made it feasible. In the process of this absorption he also facilitated the eventual merger of the Silla aristocracy in his new kingdom.

The new dynasty's bid to woo the Silla aristocrats who were still clinging to the disintegrating kingdom was first directed toward the latter's autonomous local officials who were increasingly under military pressure from the expansion-minded Hū-baekche. The first major contact which Koryō established with the Silla local authority was significantly that of Kangju (present Chinju), one of the important centers of the maritime activities on the southern coast. Although the terse description provided in our source does not permit us to see exactly how the contact was made, Koryō control of the sea must have enhanced the possibility of Kangju's contact and its voluntary submission to Wang Kōn so as to obtain the latter's protection for its maritime activities. In any case, in 919 the strongman of Kanju sent his son to the Koryō court to pledge his allegiance to the new dynasty. Apparently this was a result of the work of an emissary sent to Kangju earlier.⁴

⁴KRS 1:15b.

Koryŏ, in return, assured the strongman of Kangju of its protection by conferring a Koryŏ rank and by giving in marriage the daughter of a Koryŏ noble to his son. By 927, we find a certain Wang Pong-gyu, who apparently was a Koryŏ protege, in the control of Kangju.⁵

Frequently Wang Kŏn capitalized on the desperate military situation of the remote Silla local officials who were faced with an imminent attack by Hu-baekche's superior force. An important case of this kind, which had a decisive effect in bringing Silla to the Koryŏ camp, was Wang Kŏn's gallant defense in 930 of the Silla Sŏngjus in the Andong area, an important gateway to the capital of Silla from Koryŏ. When the Hu-baekche forces made their thrust into the strategically important area of Andong, Wang Kŏn put up a strong resistance against them until he forced the enemy forces to pull out of the area. This successful defense not only saved the areas from falling into Hu-baekche's hands, it also brought about a large scale defection of over one hundred and ten Silla Sŏngjus in the eastern seaboard area to Koryŏ. The repulsion of the Hu-baekche forces and the large scale defection of the Sŏngjus in the area had a decisive effect on the faltering Silla court which had sustained its existence, despite Hu-baekche's successful raid of Kyŏngju, so far by seeking military assistance from Koryŏ. After this incident, however, the Silla court began to work for a more permanent

⁵Prior to this, however, Kangju had been lost to Hu-baekche and it remained in the latter's hands until it was recovered by Koryŏ about this time. Hino, op. cit., p. 100.

political link with Koryŏ. Under request from the Silla king, Wang Kŏn went to the Silla capital to give his personal assurance of continued military protection to the old, exhausted kingdom. But, perhaps a stronger motive for his trip was to seek personally for the political merging of the kingdom with his. His lengthy visit in Kyŏngju apparently ended in a brighter prospect for the political merger.

Four years after his visit, the last king of Silla, Kim Pu, summoned the officials for the last Hwabaek meeting to decide the question of submitting the whole kingdom voluntarily to Koryŏ. In the Council, the voluntary surrender was opposed by the crown prince and others who favored the continued fight for defense of the kingdom. But, the king successfully led the Council to decide for the voluntary surrender and he conveyed the Council's decision to the Koryŏ capital. When an emissary arrived from the Koryŏ capital with the message that Koryŏ would heartily accept the Sillan decision, Kim Pu set out on his long forlorn journey to the Koryŏ capital with his "hundred officials and carts and horses loaded with treasures."⁶ The long procession, extending over thirty li, is said to have moved slowly through the wall of sight-seers in the once gay and prosperous Silla capital and then it disappeared from sight beyond the horizon. Gone with the procession was the kingdom once powerful and prosperous; also gone was the kolp'um system which was the foundation of the Silla aristocracy.

⁶SS 12:11a-12a.

It should be noted, however, that the disappearance of the kolp'um system was only a consequence of the voluntary dissolution of the kingdom by a decision of the Silla aristocracy itself; it was not as a result of the explicit challenge made by another hostile social group against the Silla social order. Under the circumstances, it seems reasonable to believe that such a voluntary dissolution was decided by the main benefactors of the kolp'um system, the Silla aristocracy, when they saw that their dying kingdom had exhausted its usefulness. But how could the new dynasty serve their interests better than their own kingdom? For one thing, their own kingdom had become too powerless to protect their interests effectively; but more importantly, they saw in the policy of the new dynasty a better prospect and a better chance for the survival of their own socio-political order than in the ineffectual policy of their own government. In other words, the voluntary dissolution of the kolp'um system was carried out by its own vested interest group (the Silla aristocracy) under the notion that the essence of the Silla social order would be transmitted and preserved in Koryŏ through their wholesale transition into the new Koryŏ ruling class. Wang Kŏn and his political advisors helped to foster such notion in the minds of the Silla aristocrats. In fact, as will be witnessed later, much of the kolp'um system became integrated in the socio-political order of the Koryŏ dynasty through the conscientious effort of the new Koryŏ government.

It is also significant to point out that neither Wang Kŏn

nor Kyŏn Hwŏn had ever openly challenged the social order of Silla. What they did challenge by claiming their titles as successors of Koguryŏ and Paekche, respectively, was the political hegemony of Silla over the peninsula. Moreover, Kim Kung-ye who had manifested an open hatred against the Silla aristocracy had only invited more causes for his early downfall. In the case of Kyŏn Hwŏn, even though he successfully invaded the Silla capital in 927 and caused the Silla king to commit suicide, he neither attempted to annex Silla outrightly nor did he succeed in setting up his puppet regime in Kyŏngju. Instead, he dutifully installed another Silla royal member, Kim Pu, to the throne and then he left. It is quite evident that the Silla social order was upheld by all the parties concerned as something of an inviolable and sacred system, and that it was only nominally discarded in the end by its own vested interests for the reason of expediency.

The policy to preserve the Silla social order in Koryŏ was clear from the beginning in Wang Kŏn's actions. For example, when a Silla sŏngju voluntarily submitted himself to the Koryŏ authority, he was not only permitted to keep his position, but also was often promoted to a higher Koryŏ rank as a reward. Wang Kŏn continued to apply such treatment to the Silla aristocracy even after Silla joined his kingdom. Thus, when Kim Pu came to the Koryŏ capital and wished to pledge his allegiance personally to Wang Kŏn by conducting the ceremony of the ruler-subject, The Koryŏ king would not let his new subject, the former Silla king, to do it; but,

only upon the insistence of his ministers, we are told, did Wang Kŏn agree to hold this ceremony. In return for the allegiance, Wang Kŏn gave his own daughter in marriage to the former Silla king, bestowed upon him the highest titular rank of Chŏng-Sung and a titular title of King of Mangnang with an annual emolument of 1,000 bushels (sŏk) of rice. The Koryŏ king also granted to Kim Pu the latter's former capital, Kyŏngju, as his sigŭp, and appointed him as its Sasimgwan.⁷ The Silla officials who accompanied their king to Koryŏ were also given appointments in the Koryŏ government, as well as land grants. In all these cases, everyone seems to have received a treatment in accordance with his Bone status. This is indicated in the orderliness with which these people became assimilated into the new society. The remarkable absence of signs of dissatisfaction on the part of the ex-Silla aristocrats in Koryŏ is a silent testimony of the fair treatment they received in the new kingdom. All of these actions clearly indicate that the traditional privilege of the Silla aristocracy was explicitly acknowledged by Wang Kŏn. In fact, these ex-Silla aristocrats seem to have given their full cooperation to the new dynasty and significantly contributed to the restoration of the Silla social order in Koryŏ through their gradual absorption into the Koryŏ ruling class.

With the peaceful absorption of Silla there now remained only the subjugation of Hu-baekche before Wang Kŏn could bring

⁷For the function of Sasimgwan see pp. 80f of this dissertation.

the whole peninsula under his rule. A godsent opportunity came for Wang Kŏn when an internal discordance in Hu-baekche exploded in 935 in a sudden seizure of power by Yi Sin-gŭm, the eldest son of Kyŏn Hwŏn. Sin-gŭm's action was a fatal blow to whatever chance Hu-baekche had of winning her bitter competition with Koryŏ for the political supremacy in the peninsula. It also provided a rare opportunity for Wang Kŏn to liquidate the last and foremost obstacle to his political unification of the peninsula. When heart-broken and vengeful Kyŏn Hwŏn managed to escape from prison and fled to Koryŏ, Wang Kŏn seized the opportunity and immediately launched his last campaign against Hu-baekche. This time, with the aid of Kyŏn Hwŏn, his former rival, Wang Kŏn destroyed Hu-baekche in late 936 and reunified Korea once more from the turmoil of civil strife which had raged in the country for nearly half a century.

The Diffused Power under Wang Kŏn

In contrast to the peaceful and voluntary absorption of Silla, the forceful destruction of Hu-baekche once again underlined Koryŏ's historic role as the successor of Silla and the preserver of the Sillan socio-political order in Korea. This historic role perhaps can be more explicitly found in the political arrangements which Wang Kŏn made with many former Silla local officials, particularly with the sŏngjus. Even after Wang Kŏn achieved the physical reunification of Korea, he still had to solve a more thorny question of how to extend

the political authority of his new dynasty effectively over the areas outside of his immediate influence. Beyond the periphery of his old domain from the pre-unification days, there lay the territory actually controlled by many former Silla *sōngjus*--including some non-Silla aristocratic local strongmen who had risen during the turmoil. These men enjoyed more than ever the traditional power in their locality during the civil turmoil. They, in fact, seem to have steadily increased their power ever since the breakdown of the Silla political order and they exercised a completely independent authority, in lieu of the central control, in their own local areas. They clung fast to their independent power and would not easily surrender it to the new dynasty. With a few exceptions, their authority was after all legitimately vested to them under the constitution of the old kingdom which was the only lawful authority as far as they were concerned.

Wang Kōn, probably knowing that he could not possibly bring all the independent-minded *sōngjus* under control by the use of force alone, pursued a conciliatory policy toward them. He had done this earlier in order to lure the *sōngjus* to the area of his old domain. In general, Wang Kōn's conciliatory policy promised on his part the tacit acknowledgment of the *sōngjus'* autonomous rule in the areas of their control and, in return, he demanded a pledge of their allegiance to the new dynasty. As long as the *sōngjus* pledged and remained loyal to the new dynasty, they were permitted to retain their control over the local army and to administer the affairs of their locality

just as they pleased. To insure further that these sŏngjus would live up to their pledges of allegiance to the new dynasty, and to be sure that the new dynasty, in turn, would not lack the means to check them, Wang Kŏn reinstated the system of political hostage. Koryŏ called it the kiin system. Although it had a new name, the kiin system strongly resembled the Silla system of sangsurŭ.⁸ Under the new system, the sŏngju had to send a member of his immediate family--usually either a son or a brother--to the capital as a political hostage in order to guarantee his good faith to the Koryŏ king. Besides his role as a political hostage to the Koryŏ king, the kiin's important function was to provide a valuable source of information on the conditions of his locality. It is also significant that this particular aspect of the kiin's function gradually declined as Koryŏ later extended direct central control over the local government.

When the Koryŏ local government system was finally instituted, it therefore reflected the diffused power situation in the new dynasty. Thus, under the new Koryŏ system, each local strongman, who was now called the tangdaedŭng, became the chief military and civil administrator of his locality. The tangdaedŭng was assisted by a deputy, called the taedŭng, and the heads of the three bureaus--Hobu, Pyŏngbu, and Ch'angbu.⁹

⁸ Yi Kwang-nin, "Kiin-jedo ūi Pyŏnch'on e Taehayŏ," Hangnim, No. 3 (July, 1954), pp. 1-25; and Kim Sŏng-jun, "Kiin ūi Sŏng-gyŏk e Taehan Koch'al," Yŏksahakpo, Vol. X June, 1958), pp. 197-219.

⁹ The Hobu was headed by the Mangjung who was assisted by

The independent authority of the local government was expressed in the ranks and titles of the local officials. The local officials were given the same ranks as the central officials-- thus, the highest local official, for example, had the rank which was equal to the highest central official.¹⁰ The titles of the local officials were basically drawn from the titles which Silla conferred on the great nobles who held an independent political power in the area of their control. The similar titles, of course, were used in order to designate a relatively equal power status which the two groups enjoyed in their respective societies. This means that these Silla titles retained by Koryŏ local authorities still carried the old prestige with them. In fact, it was not until 983, when Koryŏ decreed a sweeping change in the local government titles as a

the Wŏnoerang and Chipsa. The Pyŏngbu was headed by the Pyŏngbugyŏng who was assisted by the Yŏnsang and the Yunae. Finally, the Ch'angbu was under the charge of the Ch'angbugyŏng who had no assistant under him. Ch'ŏn Kwan-u, "Hanin Ko---Koryŏ Ch'ogi ūi Chibang-t'ongje e Kwanhan Il-goch'al," Sahoezwahak, Vol. II (Mar., 1958), pp. 33-39.

¹⁰ Koryŏ initially used indiscriminately both Silla and T'aebong ranks, but soon it developed a uniform system of nine ranks based upon the T'aebong system. The nine rank system was in use until Koryŏ developed the yangban system in the late tenth century. The new system of nine grade rank reads as follows:

1st grade	Samjung-daegwang	and	Chung-daegwang
2nd grade	Taegwang	and	Chŏnggwang
3rd grade	Taesung	and	Chwasung
4th grade	Taesang	and	Wŏnbo
5th grade	Chŏngbo		
6th grade	Wŏnyun	and	Chwayun
7th grade	Chŏngjo	and	Chŏngwi
8th grade	Poyun		
9th grade	Kunyun	and	Chungyun

part of a concerted measure to strengthen central control over local authorities, that the old titles were abandoned. Another interesting point that indicates the local autonomy in early Koryŏ was the existence of a military bureau, the Pyŏngbu, at the local government level. The main function of this bureau was undoubtedly the maintenance of public order at the local level. This placed a local army in the hands of the Tangdaedŭng, and he used it usually as a private army of his own. All in all, the organization of the Koryŏ's local government already strongly reminds us of the local government system in Silla. Wang Kŏn apparently preserved it in the process of accommodating the autonomous sŏngjus in the outlying areas. The whole set-up could be properly described as a decentralized system of government as it was in Silla.

Further witness to the decentralization of government structure is found in another local office of early Koryŏ, the sasingwan. The sasingwan was first established in 935 when Wang Kŏn appointed Kim Pu, the last king of Silla, to the Sasingwan of Kyŏngju, the Silla capital. In the succeeding years, many powerful Koryŏ officials, who had secured a position of power through their military service in establishing the new dynasty, followed the suit by simply acting as the sasingwan of their own sigŭp which was usually located in their native stronghold. As the sasingwan, they had the authority to appoint and to supervise all local officials below the rank of the taedŭng.¹¹ The control of local offi-

¹¹KRS 75:42b.

cials by the sasingwan might have been a realistic acknowledgment of their special power position in the area. For, as the holder of a sigūp, they had the title to claim the land-tax of the area and also the actual control of the area was his historic right as the area was his traditional stronghold. It would have been extremely difficult to take away such control from them under the decentralized system of early Koryŏ even if the central government tried to do so. The central government would probably meet the opposition of local strongmen and to surmount this opposition would have been almost impossible under the existing conditions. In short, the system acknowledged the existence of a strongman who possessed the actual political and economic power over the area.¹²

The decentralization of political authority under the new dynasty, therefore, was more accurately the reflection of actual conditions of the time. And Wang Kŏn himself did very little to change this condition. As a shrewd political realist, he must have felt the futility of attempting to destroy the age-old pattern of power configuration in Korean

¹²It is important to point out here that the head of the local unit, Tangdaedŭng (this was later changed to Hojang) was left outside the jurisdiction of the Sasingwan. This may look strange in view of the fact that all of Tangdaedŭng's immediate subordinates were placed under the Sasingwan's jurisdiction. Yet, it is precisely his omission that is most important, because it tells us the autonomous power of the local strongman (i.e. the Tangdaedŭng). It is therefore not strange that the Sasingwan gradually came under the increasing control of the central government until it was completely abolished in 1318, when Koryŏ was under the Mongol control. This was largely as a result of the intermediary role the Sasingwan had eventually come to assume between the central and the local authorities in Koryŏ. KRS 75:42b-44a.

society. Rather than try to overturn the balance of power in his favor, he simply adjusted his position to the existing pattern by accepting the decentralized rule for his kingdom. But, at the same time, he made certain that he had the sufficient means at his disposal with which to command any possible situation in the kingdom.

The decentralized power situation, therefore, was counter balanced by a network of central control systems maintained by the new dynasty. These were basically military in nature with the aim of insuring the subordination of the independent minded local authorities to the central government. The new dynasty instituted these systems of control through a network of garrison towns (chin) and regional commandaries (tohobu or todokpu).

The garrison town was established at a strategic point in the country and was maintained by a garrison troop placed under the direct control of the central government. The garrison troops were, as a rule, dispatched directly from the central army, although at times they seem to have been manned by soldiers recruited locally. But they were always put under the command of a centrally appointed military officer, the chindu. The main function of the garrison town was twofold: one, to defend the kingdom against foreign invasions; two, to check local authorities. Thus, the main function for a network of garrison towns along the northern frontier was the defense against possible enemy attack from Manchuria. In contrast, the main function of the garrison towns scattered

in the south was to insure an effective surveillance over the local authorities in the area.¹³ The chin system of control to check the local authorities diminished gradually as Koryŏ later pushed through the centralization of local powers. Consequently, there was a gradual disappearance of the southern chins in the later Koryŏ. On the other hand, the northern chins were strengthened in later times in order to meet the increasing need for the defense of the northern frontiers against foreign invasions. Koryŏ also set up the regional commandary in the five key political and military centers of the kingdom: P'yŏngyang (Taedohobu), Kyŏngju (Taedohobu), Chŏngju (Annam Tohobu), Sangju (Andong Todokpu), and Ch'ŏnan (Todokpu). The three locations of the tohobu were significantly the former capitals of Koguryŏ, Silla and Hu-baekche, and two of the todokpu were set up at the key military strongholds during Wang Kŏn's unification campaign, while the third was established at the important road junction that linked the capital of Koryŏ with those of Hu-baekche and Silla. These locations suggest the political as well as the military significance attached to the regional commandary by the new dynasty. The establishments of the tohobus in the cultural and political centers of the former dynasties, therefore, underlines the potential danger of these areas as the possible rallying ground for the reviv-

¹³Yi Ki-baek, "Koryŏ T'aejo-si ūi Chin e Taehayŏ," Yŏksahakpo, Vol. X (June, 1958), pp. 49-58; and Yun Mu-byŏng, "Koryŏ Pukkye Chiri Ko," Yŏksahakpo, Vols. IV and V (May, and July, 1953), pp. 37-70 and 37-89.

alists of the old dynasties. The todokpu's function was, of course, to be the military center for Koryŏ when she needed to launch punitive campaign against any local strongman in these areas. The commanderies logically became the regional political centers of the new dynasty. In these regional commanderies Wang Kŏn stationed his most seasoned troops and made them the focal points from which he extended the authority of his dynasty to territories otherwise hostile to his rule.

Although the establishment of the control system was essential to the dynastic security, it scattered large portion of the army over the peninsula under the commands of independent-minded military leaders. Especially the troops stationed in the regional commandaries had the potential danger of being easily turned into a serious menace to the dynastic security as their commanders controlled the troops very much like private armies. The systems of control, therefore, were like a double-edged sword. They could become the guardian of the new dynasty, especially when the powerful generals were united in their loyal service to the dynasty; but they could also turn into a menace to the dynasty if the generals allowed themselves to be directed by their selfish ambitions. As long as Wang Kŏn lived, however, he could command the loyalty of these powerful generals and he could count on them to make the controlling mechanism effective. But his eventual death left the kingdom without a leader who could rally the support of the powerful generals

around the throne and continue the unfinished work of the founder. A power struggle involving the generals became inevitable after Wang Kŏn's death.

It seems pertinent at this point, then, to make a few observations about the position of the generals under Wang Kŏn. First of all, in their social background some generals undoubtedly came from socially undistinguished families.¹⁴ Moreover, their low social origin turned them into a group socially irreconcilable with the others in the government, the former Silla aristocrats. This social dichotomy in the important followers of Wang Kŏn seems to have been partly promoted by Wang Kŏn himself. Because, in spite of his heavy dependence on the officials of the Silla aristocratic background in the government, he seems to have been aware of the fact that originally his power was not built on the strength of the Silla aristocrats but on the strength of the men of non-Silla aristocratic background who successfully defied the kolp'um system in Silla. Wang Kŏn's rise to power initially owed much to the men of this calibre, and he seems to have tried to keep their influence strong among his armies. It is also evident that he had made a special effort to promote in them a strong sense of loyalty and dedication for the cause of his dynasty and he frequently relied upon their service for the physical protection of the kingdom. His effort might have been a result of his belief that their continual service in the government as part of his officialdom would exert a

¹⁴KRS 127:1a.

healthy influence in the new dynasty, particularly by counter-acting the likely domination of the government by the officials of the Silla aristocratic background. Notwithstanding, Wang Kōn's effort, in time, produced a division of his officials into two socially distinctive groups.

In fact, the two groups could find little in common except that they both vied for the position of dominance in the government. Their different social origins obviously led each group to attain an outlook basically different from the other. Their irreconcilable differences might have been aggravated by the difference in their taste, and training, as well as by the surviving Silla Bone prejudice in Koryō. These differences eventually came into sharp focus during the first succession struggle in Koryō.

Another aspect of the generals was their possession of independent military power. This was largely a by-product of the early Koryō military organization which was essentially based upon the Silla military system. Like the old Silla military organization, each military unit under Wang Kōn was maintained as an autonomous organization manned, trained, and supplied by its commander. Although all military units in Koryō were nominally under Wang Kōn's command, in reality he depended upon the loyalty of each individual commander for the control of the army since the soldiers pledged their loyalty to the commander of their unit and not to Wang Kōn. The existence of these autonomous generals, therefore, imposed a difficult and tricky problem for the new dynasty.

The First Succession Struggle

Independent military power, particularly in the hands of Wang Kŏn's trusted but powerful general, quickly turned into a serious menace to the royal authority with the passing of Wang Kŏn. The powerful generals with their personal armies soon became involved in a power struggle which revolved around the question of succession to the throne. Earlier, in 918, Wang Kŏn formally had installed his eldest son Mu as the crown prince and heir-apparent. This was carried out against the background of considerable opposition. The opposition's contention was that Mu's mother, Queen O of Maju, whom Wang Kŏn took as a wife during his famous campaign against the Hu-baekche force in Maju, came from a socially undistinguished family in the former Hu-baekche territory of Mokp'o, and that a son born to her would not be fit to bear the title of heir-apparent.¹⁵ But with the endorsement of his trusted general, Pak Sur-hi, Wang Kŏn pushed through his plan without any serious obstruction. Subsequently, at his death bed, Wang Kŏn left his will with Pak asking the general to see to it that the heir-apparent succeed to the throne after his death. Wang Kŏn's wish was accordingly carried out with the coronation of Mu (Hye-jong) immediately following the founder's death. This however, did not settle the matter. The controversy was carried over to the question of the next succession and the question of naming successor soon led to an open conflict among the con-

¹⁵KRS 88:3a.

tending princes and a number of powerful generals.

The central figures in this struggle were King Mu's half brothers, Princes Yo and So, who were the second and third eldest sons of Wang Kōn, and the King's father-in-law, Wang Kyu who was Wang Kōn's trusted general and was holder of a second grade rank. The two young princes, born to Queen Yu of Ch'ungju who probably came from a noble family, were strong contenders for the throne and worked closely together to block General Wang Kyu's attempt to get his infant grandson, born of his daughter and Wang Kōn, to succeed King Mu, his son-in-law. The fact that Wang Kyu had two daughters married to Wang Kōn, who had a habit of taking a wife on account of his political considerations, bespeaks of the degree of his influence and power in the new dynasty. The struggle between Wang Kyu and the two princes became an open contest of force when the two princes obtained military assistance from another powerful general, Wang Sig-yōm, a first cousin of Wang Kōn and commander of the powerful garrison force in the Pyōngyang Taedohobu. In the final showdown of force between the two rivals in 945, the troops led by Wang Sig-yōm defeated the force of Wang Kyu dealing a fatal blow to Wang Kyu and his plan. The victorious princes then executed him and his personal followers of over three hundred men.

Surprisingly, King Mu and his patron general, Pak Sur-hi, also perished at this time. What was the cause of their sudden death? The Koryōsa blames Wang Kyu for their death.

But this is very unlikely.¹⁶ The findings of the present writer point toward the conclusion that the death of King Mu and General Pak Sur-hi was both the work of the two victorious princes, and that their death was carried out because of their alignment with Wang Kyu. For, significantly, the alignment in this power struggle appears to have been formed according to the social backgrounds of those involved. The eight known figures who were actively involved in this power struggle, seem to have aligned themselves in two groups which strongly suggests a probable political division between those who had no social ties with the Silla aristocracy and those who had such ties. The group which rallied around King Mu seems to have belonged to the former while their opponents belonged to the latter. The non-Silla aristocratic family background of his mother appears to have made King Mu the rallying center of the former group. The King was made the heir-apparent, in fact, by the initial endorsement of General Pak Sur-hi, who obtained knowledge about the wish of his lord to make Mu the successor through Queen O of Naju. We detect in this the existence of certain relationships between the queen and the general which might well have been an indication of the affinity in their social backgrounds. Such a possibility is strengthened by the fact that the general had been

¹⁶KRS 2:23b f; 92:12ab; 127:3b-4b. Evidently the story of this power struggle as presented in the Koryōsa is a distorted one. See: Ikeuchi, Mansenshi-kenkyū, pp. 107-117; and Kim Yong-dōk, "Koryō Kwangjong-jo ūi Kwagō-jedo Munje," Chungang Taehak Nonmunjip, Vol. IV (Seoul, 1960), p. 144.

the strongest single supporter of the king throughout the four years of his reign. Wang Kyu's social tie with King Mu is evident in that he was the father-in-law to the king. The king also showed more than usual indifference to the alleged scheme of Wang Kyu to dethrone him in favor of Kyu's grandson, who was only an infant boy. Most convincing of all, they all perished together at the same time when the troops under Wang Sig-yŏm triumphed in the final showdown and put prince Yo on the throne in 945.

The probable social ties of Princes Yo and So with the Silla aristocracy are seen, first of all, in the fact that Prince So was actually reared by Lady Kang of Sinju, who was apparently the daughter of a former Silla aristocrat.¹⁷ Secondly, their political alliance with Wang Sig-yŏm indicates the support of officials in the Pyŏngyang which evidently had a large settlement of the ex-Silla aristocratic families.¹⁸ Thirdly, the fact that Pak Su-gyŏng, who was evidently a Silla aristocratic descendant, gave his support to the two princes also suggests the two princes' tie with the Silla aristocracy.¹⁹ The last evidence of their Sillan ties is suggested by the role of Ch'oe Chi-mong in this power struggle. Ch'oe, a noted scholar of Chinese learning and one of the better known Silla

¹⁷Queen Kang's father, Kang Ki-ju, was a holder of the sixth grade Silla rank, Ach'an. KRS 88:7b.

¹⁸KRS 1:16b.

¹⁹For the family background of Pak Su-gyŏng, see pp. 116-118 of this dissertation.

aristocrats who had gathered around Wang Kōn, was in charge of the official astrology under King Mu. In this capacity he had easy access to the king and allegedly saved the king's life from the assassins sent by Wang Kyu.²⁰ Yet, despite his close association with the king, he was not affected by the purge after the final showdown. On the contrary, he received a handsome reward by new King Yo for his service, the nature of which is not spelled out in any place. The truth seems to have been that Ch'oe worked for the cause of the two princes while serving in the official capacity as the divination expert under King Mu.

The alignment of the participants along their social origins leaves little doubt as to the nature of this succession struggle. Clearly the first succession struggle in Koryō was a power struggle between two socially irreconcilable groups in the government. The death of Wang Kōn and resultant vacancy in the throne provided an occasion for the two antagonistic groups to turn their precarious relationships into open hostility. The magnitude of the armed confrontation can be seen in Ch'oe Sŭng-no's eye-witness account that the armed crash had produced a list of casualties that included half of all the officials of Koryō's two capitals, Kaesōng and Pyōngyang.²¹ On the surface, the contest was to decide who would become the successor to the throne; but in actual reality it

²⁰KRS 92:13a.

²¹KRS 93:10a f.

decided a more fundamental question of which of the two groups would take the reign of the government as the dominant political group in Koryŏ. The difference in outlooks of the two groups made this bloody contest of crucial importance for the future of the young dynasty. Whichever group should win the contest, the victors would certainly seek a permanent accommodation for their power and their own social group in the kingdom, and they would reconstruct the Koryŏ government in such a way as to insure their political supremacy and to legitimatise their power.

The final outcome of the bitter power struggle, was the victory of the Silla aristocratic forces. Their victory removed from the scene the only group that actually possessed the power to challenge the supremacy of the traditional ruling class. The outcome therefore reassured the traditional social position and privileges of the Silla aristocracy and it reinstated their supremacy in Korea. The new epoch, as we will see later, was soon to witness a complete destruction of the autonomous military power of the independent generals and also it would produce the vigorous resurgence of the former Silla aristocracy in Koryŏ. But for the moment the victory saw the dissolution of the basis of power for the important generals of non-Silla aristocratic background who were directly involved in the power struggle. The victors seem to have literally rooted out the power basis of their major opponents. The severity and effectiveness with which they destroyed their adversaries were revealed in the wholesale massacre of over

three hundred followers of Wang Kyu at that time.

Another immediate result of their victory was Prince Yo's succession to the throne. Prince Yo, however, did not remain on the throne for long. After only a little over three years of reign, he suddenly became ill, so we are told, and died at the young age of twenty-seven se.²² Although we are left in the dark as to the real causes of his death, it is interesting to note that it followed only about two months after the death of General Wang Sig-yŏm whose military assistance, it should be remembered, brought victory to the young prince. Under the circumstances, it is likely that his death was caused by the intrigue of someone, possibly his ambitious brother, Prince So, who as one of the most important beneficiaries of the power struggle was to succeed him to the throne.

In the spring of 949, King So (Kwang-jong) was inaugurated as the fourth King of Koryŏ and he immediately launched an energetic policy which was to become an epochal event in Koryŏ history. But before we proceed to a discussion of this epochal event, we should pause here for an examination of the famous Ten Article Injunction of Wang Kŏn. It is appropriate to study the Injunction at this point because it furnishes us with a valuable insight to the thinking of Wang Kŏn and his close advisors, and also as a fitting conclusion to Wang Kŏn's lasting achievements as the founder of Koryŏ dynasty.

²²KRS 2:25b.

The Ten Article Injunction

The Ten Article Injunction was intended to set out the principal guidance for the policy of the new dynasty and it was put down in the form of personal advice by Wang Kŏn to his successors for the sake of protecting the Dynasty's vital interests. It may be safe to assume, however, that the Injunction was actually written by Wang Kŏn's chief political advisors under his direction, and that as such it reflects not only Wang Kŏn's ideas but also his advisors'.²³ Wang Kŏn's advice as stipulated in the Injunction did not have a binding force on his successors although it did exert a considerable influence on their thinking over the course of time as something of a constitution laid out by the founder of the Dynasty. In fact, it was often referred to as such by the later Koryŏ kings and officials. Our concern with the document, however,

²³The authenticity of Wang Kŏn's Ten Article Injunction has become a subject of controversy among historians. Two diametrically opposing positions have been taken on the subject by two notable scholars. The late Professor Imanishi Ryū took the position that the Injunction was a later fabrication of Koryŏ officials who merely used it to put down their own ideas under the name of Wang Kŏn. He picked out Ch'oe Hang, a grandson of famous Ch'oe On-wi, as the one who was probably responsible for this fabrication. On the other hand, Professor Yi Pyŏng-do believes that the Injunction is an authentic document actually produced by the founder of the dynasty as asserted in the Koryŏsa. This writer is inclined to agree with the Professor Yi's position. He, however, thinks that the document might have been lost temporarily at the time of the first succession struggle in 945 rather than at the time of Kang Cho's mutiny in 1009 as suggested by Professor Yi. See: Imanishi Ryū, "Shiragi Sō Tōsen ni Tsuite," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. II, No. 2 (May, 1912), pp. 247-263; _____, "Kōrai Taiso Kunyō-jūjō ni Tsuite," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (Sept., 1918), pp. 419-433; and Yi Pyŏng-do, Koryŏ-sidae ūi Yōngu (Seoul, 1954), pp. 28-61

is more with how it reflected the ideas of the architects of the Koryŏ dynasty than how it influenced the policy of the dynasty.

Of the ten articles in the Injunction, four deal with the religious questions as they affected the dynasty and the rest deal with more specific aspects of government. The mere numerical preponderance on the religious questions explains by itself the importance which Wang Kŏn had placed on these matters in protecting the safety of his dynasty.

The religions referred to in the Injunction are Buddhism and the Chinese pseudo-religious practices Feng-sui and Ch'an-wei, and more indigenous Shamanism. The Koreans borrowed the first two religious beliefs from China and fused them with their old indigenous religious practices. The resulting fusion seems to have produced an even stronger appeal in these two borrowed religions than was otherwise possible. Evidently these mixed religions were widely held by Koreans at the time and Wang Kŏn also adhered very strongly to them, especially to the doctrine advanced by Monk To-sŏn.²⁴ Following the belief of the popular religions, the Injunction specifically states that Wang Kŏn's successful unification was the result of the approval of his mission for Korea by the supernatural spirits of the sacred mountains and rivers in Korea, and that his successful establishment of a new dynasty was the

²⁴ Takabashi Tōru, "Taikaku-kakushi Giten no Kōrai-bukkyō ni Taisuru Keiron ni Tsuite," Chōsen-gakuhō, Vol. X (Dec., 1956), pp. 116-119.

result of the blessing and protection of the Buddha. In other words, his mission was blessed by the natural spirits and his family was destined through divine favor to become the ruling house of Korea.

The Injunction, then, warns the successors to the throne of the danger of losing divine favor should they permit treacherous subjects to band together with Buddhist priests to build many halls of prayers (wŏn-dang) in order to attain their own selfish political goals. The underlying assumption of this warning is that the temple construction for the political purpose should be controlled by the dynastic authority, and that its rigorous control was essential to the perpetuation of the divine protection for the ruling house. In other words, the Injunction set up the rule that religious invocation for the divine protection should be an exclusive prerogative of the dynastic ruling house and it should be only exercised to promote the political interests of the dynasty.

Wang Kŏn himself did much during his reign to patronize Buddhism for his dynasty. He invited most renowned Buddhist monks of the time to the court to service for his new dynasty. At least three monks were conferred the honor of the Royal Tutor (Wangsa) and they seem to have been consulted frequently on important dynastic affairs by Wang Kŏn. He built many government sponsored Buddhist temples in the country. He also gave up two of his own residences to be converted into Buddhist temples.²⁵ He allowed himself to be called the

²⁵Ibid., pp. 113, 116.

disciple of these honored monks and he went through the ceremony of bowing down before the Wangsa to show his reverence to Buddha and his creed. These actions carried great political significance because of the authority which the popular religion commanded among the populace. At the same time, we should not overlook the effect which the actions might have had on Wang Kōn himself. The moral overtones of the religious activities might have restricted an overt exploitation of the religious authority for mere political ends. Nevertheless, the government power to control all important clerical activities in Koryō seems to have cancelled out whatever influence the priests would have been able to exert upon the dynastic political authority.

The Injunction also directs the observation of the two national religious celebrations, the yondŭng and p'alghan. The Injunction states that the yondŭng celebrated the Buddha, while the p'alghan celebration was for the spirits of the sacred nature objects in Korea--the Heavenly Spirit, the five mountain peaks, the famous mountains, the great rivers, and the spirits of dragon. These nature spirits were no other than the most outstanding indigenous gods that the Koreans had worshipped since ancient times. The Koreans regarded these nature gods as the protectors of their welfare, particularly of their agriculture and warfare. It is believed that the worship of the native gods in ancient times took place in every autumn after the harvest, and that the occasion provided an opportunity for festival activities for the people.

As time passed, the religious celebration acquired more and more political significance as the political leaders deliberately used the occasion for their political benefits. In Koryŏ, the religious celebrations like the p'algwān and the yondŭng were used by the government to promote its political ends. The fact that both the p'algwān and yondŭng celebrations required formal participation of the king and officials in the opening ceremonies indicates the great political significance attached to them by the dynasty. The celebrations were also observed in the provinces under the auspices of the local governments and the people enjoyed several days of gay festivities. In other words, the popular observance of these religious ceremonies was deliberately institutionalized by Koryŏ to promote a religious cult for the political interest of the dynasty.

At least in one instance, the Injunction makes a strong defense of Korean indigenous institutions in a voice of clear nationalism (Article 4).

"We in the eastern country (Korea) have for a long time looked upon the T'ang culture with admiration and have adopted all her institutions. But, as the land differs from one country to another, so does the human nature. Our institutions, therefore, need not be the same as Chinese institutions.

Kitan is a country of beasts. Her customs and language are different from ours. No political system of hers should prudently be imitated by us."²⁶

An eclectic attitude expressed in this article with respect to the imitation of the Chinese institutions suggests that Wang

²⁶KRS 2:15.

Kōn and his chief political advisors were clearly aware of the difference in the conditions of the two societies and of the danger involved in the indiscriminate imitation of the Chinese culture. The attitude toward Kitan clearly indicates a strong emotional rejection. But this was largely due to the fact that Koryō at this time was already feeling the military pressure of her northern neighbor.

Another realistic acknowledgment of the condition in Korea at this time is expressed in Article 9, which deals with the question of the emolument of the officials. The article reflects the existence of independent power in the hands of powerful officials and it also shows the necessity of maintaining their power through a policy of concealed appeasement to them. The Article states:

"The emolument of the officials should be determined on the basis of the size of their domain and should not be arbitrarily increased or reduced... Should a man of no meritorious records, a mere relative, or personal associates collusively receive heavenly (public) emolument, it would cause the resentment among the people. Such recipients cannot enjoy the blessed emolument for too long. This should by all means be avoided..."²⁷

To use the size of one's domain as the basis for determining the official emolument was implicit in the Silla sigūp system which was revived in early Koryō. Such system clearly reflected the diffused power situation in which the strong officials could act independently were their interests not properly taken into consideration by the government. This

²⁷KRS 2:16b-17a.

article, therefore, is suggestive of the reality of the power situation in the early Koryŏ society--the situation in which the officials held a powerful balance of power for maintaining the dynastic stability.

Wang Kŏn's anxiety over the dynastic stability is also expressed in Article 3 which defines the dynastic succession rule. Formal recognition is given to the rule of primogeniture. But the Article then asserts that if the eldest son or even next eldest son of the king happened to be unworthy of becoming the successor, the son who was most acclaimed by the multitude should succeed to the throne. Despite the article's citation of the examples of the Chinese legendary rulers, Yao and Shun to prove the point, the provision in the Article sounds more like a compromise between the old Silla system of selection of the king and the Chinese rule of primogeniture.

At least two more political devices designed to protect the dynastic stability were stipulated in the Injunction. Article 8 warns that no natives of the former Hu-baekche territory should be permitted to serve in the Koryŏ court lest they would take over the Koryŏ government, probably through the establishment of a blood relationship with the royal family. The political discrimination against the people of Koryŏ's old rival kingdom was justified by the application of the Chinese theory of geomancy. The Article says that the topographical characteristics of the area made the people of the area perpetually revengeful. Also banned from government service were the people of a slave social status and of

certain mean professions associated with transportation stations. The discrimination against these people was justified on the basis of the social differentiation of the Silla society. Included in this category of people were also those manumitted since the Silla period. The Chinese theory of geomancy was also applied to explain the geo-political importance of the western capital, P'yŏng yang. Article 5 urges frequent royal visits to the strategically important western capital so as to secure peace for the dynasty. On other occasions, the Injunction warns against negligence in armed preparedness, even in times of peace, as the country was neighbored by hostile nations.

The general ideological line of the Injunction is clearly Confucian in form and language, if not in content. The Confucian orientation of the architects of the new dynasty is clearly manifested in Article 7 which states:

"It is extremely difficult for a ruler to win the hearts of the people. If the ruler wishes to win the hearts of the people, it is important that he should comply with the remonstrance of the officials and keep the slanders away. If he complies with the remonstrance, then he becomes a sage ruler. If he trusts no slanderers who tempt him like honey, then all slanders would disappear by themselves.

"If a ruler mobilizes his subjects for the public work with a proper timing--by using the slack seasons--, if he reduces their burdens of corvee labor and taxes, and if he knows the hardship of the farmers, then he will automatically win the hearts of the people; his kingdom will be prosperous, and his subjects will be contented.....When the reward and punishment are administered correctly with justice, the yin and yang become orderly."²⁸

²⁸KRS 2:16a f.

The stress on the ruler's need to comply with the remonstrances of the officials as the sure way to win the support of his subjects is, needless to say, the Confucian concept prescribed for an ideal ruler. Out of all the Confucian doctrines, interestingly the Article chose to stress the ruler's submission to the remonstrations of his officials for securing the popular support. The stress may well have been motivated by Wang Kōn's reacknowledgment of the traditional power position of the officials in the government. It is significant, then, that the stress was placed in the Article not on the unlimited prerogatives of the ruler but rather on his compelling obligations. But the assumed political system implicit in the Article is clearly the Chinese political system. The formal ideological commitment to the Confucian political philosophy might have been an inevitable consequence of the Confucian educational background of the Koryō ruling class. Their Confucian orientation was to be increasingly manifested in the actual policies of the dynasty in the following century. The Confucian commitment is also clear in the concluding article of the Injunction when it urged the royal successors to study the Confucian classics and Chinese history intensively so that they could guide themselves by the examples of the ancient.

In the foregoing pages we have examined the important policy guidances laid down in the Ten Article Injunction by the founder of the Koryō Dynasty. From the examination we have discovered that the basic ideas the founder expounded

in the Injunction can often be traced back to beliefs and practices indigenous to Korea; but they were usually coated and rationalized by the use of Chinese theories and precedents. In the process of rationalizing their ideas and actions, it becomes clear how the Koreans found the Chinese concepts most useful. In other words, with the benefit of the more sophisticated Buddhist and Confucian philosophers, they were able to give a rational explanation for the ideas and practices they had inherited from their own cultural tradition. There is no doubt that in this process many Chinese ideas and institutions became fused with the Korean tradition and they became, in effect, an integral part of the new Korean tradition. Through such a process of fusion the Koreans absorbed the Chinese socio-political concepts and practices in Koryŏ time. This point can be further illustrated by the development of Koryŏ under King So, which will be the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMERGENCE OF THE YANGBAN SYSTEM

The Consolidation of the Royal Power

The first decade of King So's reign was an important turning point in the development of the early Koryŏ government. His experiences during the precarious period of the first succession struggle seem to have taught him the urgent need for consolidating the royal power; and from the time of his ascent to the throne he made a determined effort to carry this out. The threat that came from powerful generals, particularly from the consort family of Wang Kyu, was still fresh in his memory. The young king married his own half-sister (Wang Kŏn's eldest daughter) and he made her his queen in order to prevent any recurrence of the threat to royal prerogatives from the consort family; though we should remember that such a marriage was not uncommon in a society which traditionally maintained a practice of endogamy.

As part of his concerted move to strengthen the royal power, the young king promulgated a series of new and daring measures to materially increase the strength of his authority. The first measure, which he launched immediately following his coronation in 949, was a new quota system of taxation for the local districts. The new measure set a fixed amount of annual tax-tribute--in place of the old system of undeterminable tax-tribute--for each local district. The aim of the new measure,

it seems, was to gain the financial stability of the central government through the regular and predeterminable revenue and to strengthen the financial position of the court. Moreover, the newly strengthened financial position was to be used in building up the Royal Regiment and in strengthening the royal power.

When the king took steps to increase the size of his Royal Regiment, he made another calculated move. The king drew all of the new recruits for his royal regiment from provinces.¹ The purpose, it seems was to base his new strength on the resources of the provinces so as to avail himself of these resources when he confronted the autonomous and powerful generals for a final showdown. It should be remembered that one of the main duties assigned to the generals under Wang Kōn was to oversee the local strongmen in remote areas. But when the independent-minded generals lost their political bondage to the dynastic ruling house after the death of Wang Kōn, they turned into a serious menace to the dynastic security. King So wished to remove this menace. He was seeking to fulfill his wish through a carefully calculated new alignment with the provincial forces.

King So's next move, therefore, demanded the founding of an issue which would assure him the support of the provincial forces in destroying the power of the generals. The issue he chose was the slave question. With this issue he could strike

¹KRS 93:13b.

out at the economic base of the powerful generals, and at the same time he could be assured of loyalty and support from the local strongmen because of the promise of gain to the local strongmen. In 956 he promulgated The Slave Investigation Act (Nobi-anhōn-bop) for the explicit purpose of examining all dubious slave cases. If an examination revealed any irregularity in enslavement, under the Act the slaves concerned were immediately released from their status without any compensation to their owners. The manumitted slaves were then turned over to the local authorities of the district from which they had originally come and they were restored to the tax-paying commoner's status. The whole process, in effect, was intended to deprive the powerful families of as many slaves as possible and to transfer them to the local authorities to convert their economic value into regular tax revenue for the government. Unfortunately it is now impossible for us to make even an estimate of the number of slaves affected by this Act. But the number must have been considerable as the Act seems to have affected severely the large slave owners of the time. Among these large slave owners were many military leaders who had acquired their slaves during the civil strife of the Latter Three Kingdom period.² Their slaves were mostly ex-commoners who joined the war for one reason or another and were captured later in the battle field. These prisoners were then simply transformed into slaves by their captors. Another way the power-

²KRS 93:21a.

ful families enlarged their slave holdings was through purchase. Even among the purchased slaves there were many ex-commoners who sold themselves because of their inability to pay off heavy debts. In any case, there is little doubt that the Slave investigation Act really gave King So an indispensable means with which to gain support of the provincial forces, and at the same time it also provided him with a powerful weapon to strike at the economic foundation of the powerful families.

The opposition of the powerful families against the Act was as instantaneous as it was vigorous. An eye-witness of the time, Ch'oe Sŭng-no, reported that there were no meritorious subjects who did not express their resentment and criticize the king for the Act.³ Even the queen, possibly under pressure from the urgings of powerful meritorious subjects, pleaded to her husband to scrap the measure. But nothing could stop the determined young king from carrying out the Act. Neither the queen's pleading nor the meritorious subjects' grim memorials could change the king's mind.

It should be pointed out in this connection that bitter attacks of desperate meritorious subjects were also directed toward the unwarranted influence of "Chinese political refugees" in the court, upon whom the king is said to have relied heavily at the time.⁴ The chief target of their attack was Shuang Chi,

³KRS 93:21b.

⁴KRS 93:1b f, 7b, 23ab; and Kim Chong-sŏ and others, Koryŏsa-jŏryŏ (Hōsa-bunkō edition; Tokyo: Gakushuin Tōyōbunka Kenkyūso, 1960), 2:7b, 11a.

probably the most prominent and certainly the most influential Chinese in King So's court. How, we wonder, did Shuang Chi come to occupy such an influential position under King So? What relations did he have with the Slave Investigation Act and with other policies of King So? Why did King So employ a Chinese as his confidential advisor in the first place? These are questions which deserve some attention before we continue to explore the significance of King So's measures.

In the background of Shuang Chi's employment in Koryŏ was the historic gravitational pull of the brilliant Chinese civilization for over a millennium. By early Koryŏ, this gravitational pull became simply too great for the culturally less privileged Korea to resist. It was almost inevitable that Korea, as a small nation located on the periphery of one of the great centers of world civilization, would in time manifest her response to the cultural stimulation from China. Although Silla had been relatively successful in resisting the Chinese cultural influence by adopting an eclectic attitude toward it, the ever-increasing importation of Chinese culture, particularly from the seventh century on, began to show its inevitable consequences in Korea by early Koryŏ. After centuries of exposure the Koreans were now beginning to manifest their appreciation of Chinese literature. Years of diligent study gave many of the early Koryŏ scholars a mastery of the difficult classical Chinese with a fluency that was almost native. Their accomplished scholarship also converted many of them into the Sino-philists whose activities and influence were noticeably growing

ever since late Silla. As we shall soon see, King So himself was a product of these Korean Sinophilists and he had belonged to their rank from his early youth.

It is not surprising, then, that Shuang Chi, a Chinese scholar-official with a good Confucian educational background and years of practical experience in China, attracted King So's attention and was asked to become a confidential advisor to the king. Shuang Chi happened to come to Koryŏ in 956 as one of the officials of the Chinese imperial embassy from Hou-Chou. The two countries had been exchanging embassies since King So recognized the new Chinese dynasty founded by the Tai-tsu of Hou-Chou and adopted the latter's year title in 951. At the time of his Korean mission, Shuang Chi was the Probationary Judicial Investigator of the High Court of Justice (Shih Ta-li P'ing-shih) in the Hou-Chou government. Soon after his arrival in the Koryŏ capital, however, he suddenly became ill and was forced to remain in Korea until his recovery. It was during his unexpected illness that the young Koryŏ king discovered Shuang's talent and persuaded him to stay in Koryŏ to serve under him.⁵

There is no doubt that the young king's desire to obtain a firsthand knowledge of the Chinese government system and to use it in building up his power in Koryŏ played a large part in his decision to hire Shuang Chi. During his earlier training under the tutorship of Korean scholars who had studied in T'ang

⁵KRS 93:23a.

China, he developed for himself an interest in T'ang statecraft. After his ascent to the Koryŏ throne his interest seems to have been even more intensified. He is known, for example, for his devout interest in the Chen-kuan Cheng-yao.⁶ Under the circumstances, it would be only natural that he wished to have at his side a well-learned Chinese advisor. In Shuang Chi, he found someone who could help him reorganize his government after the centralized Chinese government system. When Shuang accepted his request to remain in Koryŏ, the king promptly appointed him to the Hanlin Academy with a fourth grade Koryŏ rank, Wŏnbo.⁷

Shuang Chi, once installed as the confidential advisor to the king, must have wasted no time in leading the king into action. Significantly the Slave Investigation Act of 956 was decreed in the same year Shuang received his appointment as a Hanlin Academician in Koryŏ. Although our sources fail to mention any part that he might have played in enacting this controversial measure, it seems only logical to assume that there was some connection between him and the promulgation of the Act. The large holdings of slaves by Koryŏ meritorious subjects could not have failed to draw the attention of a Chinese advisor in Koryŏ as a major obstacle toward the establishment of a strong monarchy. For one thing slave

⁶KRS 2:26b. The Chen-kuan Cheng-yao, compiled by Mu Ching (670-749), was a collection of dialogues on government between T'ang T'ai-tsung and his ministers.

⁷KRS 93:23a.

holding was a much more significant and conspicuous institution in Korea than it was in China. It constituted one of the important sources for the aristocratic independence from monarchical control in Korea.

It did not take Shuang Chi very long to see another obvious defect in the Koryŏ government system. The Koryŏ monarch did not have the means of controlling the ideology of the officials as the Chinese emperor had; that is, Koryŏ did not have the famous Chinese civil service examination system. In the summer of 958 Shuang Chi proposed to the king the introduction of a Chinese type of civil service examination system in Koryŏ for the purpose of recruiting new officials. His proposal was accepted by the king and was put into practice immediately.

The civil service examination system which Shuang Chi introduced in Koryŏ offered four fields: letters (chesul-gwa), classics (myŏnggyŏng-gwa), divination (pog-ŏp), and medicine (i-ŏp); and the examinations in all four fields were given in pure classical Chinese. The candidates who successfully passed the chesul-gwa examination received a chinsa degree. The examination for this degree consisted of the compositions of shih, fu, and sung and an essay on contemporary affairs (simuchŭek). The successful candidates in other fields received a degree named after their respective fields. Thus, the candidate who successfully passed the examination on the Chinese classics received a myŏnggyŏng-gwa degree; a pog-ŏp degree was conferred on those who passed examinations in

astrology, ying-yang, wu-hsing, and geomancy; and an i-öp degree was given for the successful candidates in Chinese medicine. There was no fixed quota for any of these degrees as yet. The examination was held only in the capital, and the frequency of the examinations was still irregular, although they turned out to be given approximately once every other year in this period. The number of successful candidates at all examinations, however, was still relatively small. In the first Koryö examination, conducted by Shuang Chi as the examiner, the king conferred only two chinsa degrees, three degrees in the myönggyöng-gwa and two in the pog-öp. During the remaining seventeen years of his rule, until 975, King So held seven more examinations and conferred twenty-five more chinsa degrees, three more myönggyöng-gwa degrees, and one more pog-öp degree, and three more i-öp degrees, producing a grand total of twenty-seven chinsa, six classics, three medicine, and three divination degree-holders.⁸

The small number of degree-holders produced during his reign tends to disclaim any assertion that King So instituted the civil service examination in order to recruit new officials to staff his government. Rather, the facts suggest a possibility that the examination was used purposely to further his immediate political ends. It is significant, therefore, that the examination was introduced in 956, which was only

⁸Cho Chwa-ho, "Yö-dae üi Kwagö-je Ko," Yöksahakpo, Vol. X (June, 1948), pp. 125-165; and Kim Yong-dök, "Koryö Kwangjong-jo üi Kwagö-jedo Munje," Chungang Taehakkyo Nonmunjip, Vol. 4 (Nov., 1959), pp. 141-152.

two years after the enactment of the Slave Investigation Act and also two years before the prosecution of the powerful families. The fact that the king allied himself with the local forces in his attack against the powerful families suggests that the examination was probably intended to introduce a new avenue for the local officials to enter the service of the central government, thus increasing the chances of their loyal support for his policy. In other words, the examination was designed to strengthen his political alliance with the provincial forces and at the same time to improve his holds in the central officialdom through the new recruits.⁹

Another important reason behind the introduction of the examination system was to discredit the prestige of the military in the Koryŏ government. Up to this time, there is no doubt that the government had been dominated by military officials. Even though the more civil-minded ex-Silla aristocrats usually found an official position in the new dynasty, in general their position was overshadowed by the military men of influence in whose hands the real authority was vested. More often the civil officials were there to be exploited of their knowledge and experience by the military men. It is well to remember that in the past the Silla aristocracy had been martial in their traditional outlook rather than civil or scholarly. The introduction of the civil service examination

⁹In his famous memorial Ch'oe Sŭng-no actually implied this when he attacked the appointment policy of King So after the employment of Shuang Chi in the court. KRS 93:7b f.

system was calculated to turn the relative power position of the military and the civil officials in the Koryŏ government. It proposed, first of all, to increase the civil prestige in the government by improving the quality of the civil officials and by emphasizing the study of Confucian philosophy, and then it ensured that the real authority of the government was to be vested in the hands of the civil officials. The time was already ripe for such a change in Korea. As we have noted earlier, after centuries of exposure to Chinese culture, Korea had begun to produce an increasingly large number of literati by this time. Especially among the local sŏngjus, who were mostly descendants of the Silla aristocracy, there must have been a fairly large reservoir of potential candidates well qualified to seize the opportunities provided by the civil service examination.

It seems natural, then, that the cultured Silla aristocrats would get a better chance to rise to high positions in the government under King So's new measure. Their administrative experience and their knowledge of Chinese philosophy unmistakably would put them in a position far better than any other group to meet the needs of the new government, once the military powers of the generals were destroyed and an orderly civil administration was established. Such a time finally arrived for them when King So introduced the examination system. For the king, the examination system would not only strengthen his hands in the government; it would also encourage more intensive study of Confucianism.

among the Koryŏ ruling class. It was intended, therefore, to arm the officials with an ideology which was more congruent with the objectives of his policy of centralization.

The actual reorganization of the central officialdom began in 960 with the introduction of the official garbs in four different colors. This was two years after the formal introduction of the civil service examination system. The four colors of the official garbs introduced were in exact imitation of the Chinese official garbs. Their introduction was significant because it marked the beginning of a more rigid hierarchy in the Koryŏ officialdom, which in turn should have helped further the centralization of the government authority and bureaucratization of the officialdom.

The Destruction of the Military Families

What we have been witnessing in all of these steps taken by King So is, of course, his preparation for fulfilling his ultimate goal, the establishment of autocracy in Koryŏ. The immediate purpose of these steps, however, was the destruction of the basis for autonomous military power, which was the major obstacle toward the increasing central control of political and economic life in the kingdom. These steps meant, therefore, that a final crash between the resourceful king and the powerful families was inevitable. The king, undoubtedly aware of this all the time, was only waiting for an opportune moment to force his opponents into submission with an unyielding hand.

A great purge of the powerful families finally came in early 960 when King So ordered the banishment of Wang Tong and Chun-hong, holders of the third and fourth grade rank, respectively, for an alleged treason against the throne. Once it started the purge quickly spread to the rest of the powerful families. Although the Koryŏsa fails to furnish details of the purge, it does contain a brief sketch of the grim terror created by its wanton prosecutions: "The loyal and the good were trapped promiscuously; slaves sued for their grievances against their masters; and even sons slandered their fathers. The prison was so overflowed by the accused that a temporary prison was erected to accommodate them. Repeatedly the innocent were massacred.. Even many members of the royal family could not protect themselves... Everybody lived in fear. No one dared to say unnecessary words."¹⁰ This description might well be an undisguised and true picture of the situation created by the purge.

The severity of the blow which the purge inflicted upon the powerful families can be seen in the case of General Pak Su-gyŏng's family. Pak was a prominent general with distinguished meritorious records.¹¹ At least once during the civil wars of the Latter Three Kingdoms he saved Wang Kŏn's life. He rescued Wang Kŏn from an enemy siege which would certainly have cost Wang Kŏn his life if Pak had not broken

¹⁰KRS 2:28b.

¹¹KRS 92:15b-16a.

the siege in time and rescued his lord. In the last campaign which Koryŏ fought against the Hu-baekche, it was again Pak and the army under his command that turned the tide of the war against the enemy after Koryŏ's other two armies had lost their battles. When Wang Kŏn rewarded his followers for their contributions to the reunification, Pak was honored with the largest single land grant for the occasion. In the first succession struggle of 945 Pak sided with the two princes and he was later promoted to the second grade rank, the Taegwang, for his role in the struggle.

With his proven loyalty and meritorial service Pak should have enjoyed the confidence of King So. Yet, the power of his family seems to have been too menacing for the king to leave him alone. The family was evidently descended from the Silla royal clan, Pak, and it had branched out and established itself as a strong local family by the time of the T'aebong.¹² Under Wang Kŏn, the family apparently rose to be one of the leading military families, as evidenced by the rank, the Taegwang, which Su-gyŏng's father held. Probably because of his father's stature and the family's background, Su-gyŏng received the sixth grade rank, Wŏnyun, when he entered Wang Kŏn's service. He was not the only son to follow in his father's footsteps. Su-mun, who was older than Su-gyŏng, also led a career as successful as the others. Su-mun became one

¹² Fujita Ryōsaku, "Ri Shi-en to Sono Kakei," Chōsengaku Ronkō, (Tokyo: Fujida Sensei Kinen Jigyōkai, 1963), p. 412. The same article is also found in the Seikyū-gakusō, Vol. XIII (Aug., 1933), pp. 1-37, and Vol. XV (Feb., 1934), pp. 109-135.

of Wang Kŏn's trusted ministers and his influence seems to have been almost equal to that of Wang Kyu, the tragic victim of the first succession struggle.¹³

When Su-gyŏng became old and feeble, the tradition of his house was kept alive by his three sons, all of whom led successful official lives until 960. Then suddenly the great purge struck the family. The old general was apparently taken by surprise with the arrest of his three sons. Shocked and bitter over their imprisonment, he died from anguish. After this we hear nothing more of Su-gyŏng's three imprisoned sons who had every reason to suppose they had promising careers ahead of them until that fateful day in the spring of 960. Moreover, after this severe blow, it took another three full generations before the house of Pak could restore its old status as a powerful official family in Koryŏ. This time, however, it emerged not as a military family but as a famous literary family.¹⁴

There must have been a number of such tragic cases during the great purge, although our sources fail to record all the individual cases. In fact, out of the old military and civil officials who once surrounded the founder of the dynasty, Ch'oe Sŭng-no reported seven years after King So's death that there were only some forty men who managed to survive the purge and King So's relatively long reign (26 years).¹⁵

¹³KRS 2:17b.

¹⁴Fujita, op. cit., pp. 410-411; and KRS 95:17b-19b.

¹⁵KRS 93:10b.

Included among the many victims were even Confucian scholar-officials of the ex-Silla aristocratic background. Ch'oe Ŏn-wi, at one time a royal tutor and cousin of renowned Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn, lost a son who had studied in China and later became one of the king's favorite officials. In the end, Haeng-gwi fell as a victim of the king's terror.¹⁶ The king also banished the famous divination expert, Ch'oe Chi-mong, who had behind him a record of serving four Koryŏ kings, including King So himself.

Exactly how these high scholar-officials of the Silla noble background got involved in the waves of the purge is not quite clear. But King So's motive for the purge seems to throw some light on the question. It should be remembered that the real purpose of the purge was to establish autocracy under his rule. As an actual step toward the realization of the autocracy he began in 960 to address himself as "the emperor (hwangje)" instead of by the customary title reserved for the Korean monarch, "the king (wang)"; his capital he called "the imperial capital (hwangdo)" instead of the customary "royal capital (wanggyŏng)."¹⁷ These actions clearly show the king's endeavor to transform his rule into a Chinese type of autocracy.

¹⁶KRS 92:10b.

¹⁷It is interesting to note that the year of these rare incidents in Koryŏ coincided with the death of Hou-Chou T'ai-tsung and the founding of a new dynasty by Sung T'ai-tsung in China. Also noteworthy is the fact that Shuang Che, Suang Chi's father, came to Korea and received a third grade rank, Chwasung, from King So in 959. KRS 93:23b.

It is easy to understand, under the circumstances, how his actions could provoke the opposition of the ex-Silla nobles. His autocracy violated all the rules of the indigenous political system, which the ex-Silla nobles were accustomed to under the traditional power configuration in Korea. The subtle opposition which the ex-Silla nobles manifested against autocratic King So is indicated by the report that Ch'oe Chi-mong provoked King So's anger and invited a disgraceful banishment because of his supposed "misconduct (before the king) after drinking."¹⁸ There is little likelihood, however, that a man of Ch'oe Chi-mong's experience and loyalty would misbehave so badly on an official occasion as to subject himself to such a disgraceful banishment. His so-called "misconduct" might very well have been an intentional agitation on his part to discredit King So for the latter's notorious autocracy. It is little wonder, then, how King So in his persistent endeavor to realize autocracy could have alienated even scholar-officials of the Silla aristocratic background.

The antagonism of the powerful families against King So seems to have been very strong and even dangerous to his personal safety in the years following the great purge. In 961 the king moved his quarters from the palace to the private residence of Wang Yuk, a holder of the second grade rank and possibly his most trusted official. The designated reason

¹⁸KRS 92:13a.

for this move was the repair of the palace, but there is little doubt that the real reason was the danger to the personal safety of the king. He could be better protected from a possible assault by his political enemies in the smaller private residence, where he could more easily restrict the number of people who should have access to him. The king remained there for nearly three years.¹⁹ When he finally returned to the palace in 963, he issued a proclamation which was apparently addressed to the officials, who were hostile to him, for a reconciliation. Although the proclamation fell short of acknowledging openly his failure to rally the support of the officials behind him, nevertheless, it admitted the existence of grave gaps between himself and the officials in the government. In it he called for the cooperation of the officials for his effort to bridge the gaps and to reestablish the channels of broken communication.²⁰

The proclamation bears importance because it suggests the relaxation of King So's hard drive for autocracy. In two years after the proclamation the king took the formal step to make his only son, Prince Chu, official heir-apparent. The latent significance of this move is that the prince had finally been cleared of his father's suspicion which he had incurred during the purge, and that he was also assured of the succession to the throne. As we shall soon see, this move

¹⁹KRS 2:28b f.

²⁰KRS 2:28b-29a.

eventually opened the way for the prince to inaugurate the reversal of his father's policy after the death of King So in 975. The eventual reversal of King So's policy poses the question of what effect his measures had in Koryŏ, if any. In the final analysis, the king's measures seem undoubtedly to have had the effect of consolidating the power of the Wang dynasty in Korea--so firmly, in fact, that it was to last for nearly four and a half more centuries after the death of King So. The measures failed to institute, however, the Chinese type of autocracy in Korea as a permanent institution as he wished to.

The political success of King So, while it lasted, was largely due to his ability to gain support of the groups which assured him the best chance of defeating his enemies. He also chose the right issue and the right time to strike his enemy, so as to insure the total defeat of his adversaries. His alliance with the forces of Generals Wang Sig-yŏm and Pak Su-gyŏng to defeat Generals Wang Kyu and Pak Sur-hi and their forces in the first succession struggle, and his choice of Shuang Chi, the provincial resources and the slave issue to prepare himself for the final assault on the powerful families, all testify to this particular aspect of his political genius without reproach.

What brought the ultimate defeat to his autocracy in Koryŏ seems more complex, though, and it is certainly more difficult to determine. Out of the complex and often incomplete picture of this critical period, one thing does come out rather clearly: that is, his ultimate failure to

accommodate himself to the main stream of the socio-political forces in his kingdom, the resurgent ex-Silla aristocratic families. The Chinese type of autocracy certainly contained too many features at variance with the indigenous political system in which these families had vested interest. The powerful families of mid-tenth century Korea were still basically products of the Silla social order, and as such, their interest still demanded the preservation of the decentralized indigenous political system. They found the autocracy in many ways too repugnant to their interest. The critical mistake which King So committed in his ambitious undertaking was to antagonize and then alienate socially and politically important scholar-officials of the Silla aristocratic origin on top of stirring up the enmity of powerful military families. His indiscriminate attempts to castigate both military and literati families for their potential or actual opposition to his political design finally isolated him from the main current of socio-political life in his kingdom.

In order to compensate for this isolation, he became notoriously indulgent in religious pursuits in his later life. He invoked all sorts of Buddhist rituals, regardless of their cost, to obtain the blessings of Buddha for his wishes. The inception of many Buddhist prayers in the court were attributed to him by Ch'oe Sŭng-no in the famous memorial of 982. Ch'oe saw behind the king's fanatical devotion to Buddhism his anxiety for the atonement of his cold-blooded political crimes. Whatever his real motives, it is interesting to note

that the Buddhists, who gained unprecedented influence and power in the kingdom as a result of King So's religious devotion, were also subjected to his policy of centralization. King So is usually credited as the originator of the state clerical examination in Koryŏ. The institution of the Buddhist clerical examination considerably increased the government ability to control the Buddhists by placing the clerical hierarchy and the creed under its supervision.

Despite the rigorous suppression by King So, the powerful ex-Silla noble families, made an energetic resurgence in the Koryŏ government after his death and eventually they became the politically dominant group in the kingdom. Nevertheless, Koryŏ, after King So, could never become quite the same as she once was before him. Even with the help of a vigorous official redemption policy for the prosecuted, the families of once powerful generals could never completely restore the position they once enjoyed under the old political system of Wang Kŏn. Even the survivors of the boisterous and independent-minded generals could not revive their old power and influence. The basis of their military power was irreparably destroyed by King So's rigorous assault against them. Moreover, their children were prevented from inheriting whatever resources still could be salvaged from the ruin while King So was alive.²¹ On the other hand, some of the important changes instituted by the king remained even after his death. For

²¹KRS 93:18ab.

example, the policy of strengthening the central government at the cost of locally decentralized power was continued by his successors; the reorganization of the government kept pace with the continuous systematization and increasing bureaucratization of the officialdom; and the civil service examination system was not only kept, but also constantly improved as it gained more prestige and importance among the Koryŏ ruling class. As a matter of fact, in the process of the uninterrupted development of these new institutions the yangban system came into existence in Koryŏ. In many ways, therefore, the yangban system was a product of the fusion between the old indigenous Silla social order and the new Chinese political institutions introduced in Koryŏ by King So and his successors.

The Official Stipend Scale of 976

The first step toward the systematization of the Koryŏ officials was expressed in the introduction of the four official garbs in 960. Unfortunately we know very few details about this important step taken by King So. The Koryŏsa only notes it in the following terse statement:

"In the third month of the eleventh year of the reign of Kwangjong (King So) the formal garbs of all officials were introduced: the purple garb was assigned to the officials above the rank of the Wŏnyun, the crimson garb to the officials above the Chungdan-gyŏng, the red garb to the officials above the Tohang-gyŏng, and the green garb to the officials above the So-jubu."²²

²²KRS 72:9b.

Of the four titles mentioned in the quotation, the Wōnyun appears both in the official rank classifications of the T'aebong and the early Koryō as the fourth and sixth from the top, respectively, and the Tohang-gyōng (or Tohangsa-gyōng) appears as the deputy chief of the Tohangsa (the Department of Marine Affairs) in the central government and also as the chief of the Marine department in the Western Capital (P'yōng-yang) during the early Koryō.²³ The remaining two titles appear in no other historical sources, and consequently we are left without any clear knowledge of their nature.²⁴ It is obvious, however, that these titles were used to designate certain official ranks in the central government and their ranking was apparently in the order in which they appear in the passage. The relative importance, in rank, of the four different garbs was, therefore, in the order of: purple, crimson, red, and green.

The need for differentiation of the officials into these different garbs might have been created as a result of King So's suppression of the powerful families and the consequent emergence of a new group of officials to positions of respon-

²³KRS 1:10ab; 77:38b.

²⁴Both Silla and Koryō, however, had a slightly different title, Chubu, for an official in some departments of the central government. For example, the Department of the Capital Maintenance (Kyōngsōng-jujak-chōn) and the Department of Music (Umsōng-sō) in Silla had administrative assistants called the Chubu. On the other hand, the head of the Department of the Royal Registration in Koryō was called by the same name. But, the Sojubu does not appear in any other place. Suematsu Yasukazu, "Kōrai-shoki no Ryōhan ni Tsuite," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (Sept., 1953), pp. 1-31.

sibility in the government. If so, it is possible that the four garbs were introduced in order to give the necessary prestige--thus a new status symbol--to the officials recruited by King So. The adoption of the garb might have been intended to stabilize the new official hierarchy, thus adding to the new recruits a quality of permanence and respectability. The probability of this speculation becomes even more certain when we consider it in the light of the subsequent development after King So's death.

The excesses of the great purge seem to have been rather widely recognized at the time. King Chu (Kyōng-jong), succeeding to the throne in 975, quickly undertook measures of redemption for the purged.²⁵ He released from prisons the survivors of the purge victims of King So; he restored to them their titles and destroyed all the documents of litigation against them. He also cancelled the debts of the purge victims and reduced their taxes in an obvious attempt to rehabilitate the survivors of the great purge.²⁶ His redemption measure went so far as to allow the relatives of the innocent victims to seek revenge for the dead. But, when Minister Wang Sōn murdered one of the king's own uncles under the pretext of such revenge, the frightened king promptly called for an end to this by reversing his earlier decree.²⁷

²⁵King Chu's own tie with the Silla aristocracy is found in his marriage to a Silla princess, the daughter of Kim Pu. KRS 88:9b.

²⁶KRS 2:32a.

²⁷KRS 2:33a.

The reaction against King So's policy is also found in the first stipend scale for the officials of the central government, which came out in 976 under the title of the "All Grades Land-rent and Fuel-wood Scale" (Kakp'um chŏnsi kwa), and in the meritorious land grant (hunjŏn) of 977. An examination of their contents will show the extent to which King Chu restored the position of the powerful families and at the same time tried to accommodate the new officials in an obvious effort to readjust the social composition of his officialdom. In the official stipend scale of 976, the officials were first classified according to the four garbs introduced by King So; then each garb was given one, two, or three separate stipend scales based on service classifications. (See Table I.) Thus, the purple garb received a uniform scale which had eighteen grades. Its highest grade, the first p'um, received the rents from 110 kyŏl of both farm land (chŏn) and the wooded land (si).²⁸ Starting from its highest stipend of 110 kyŏl on the top, a deduction of five kyŏl of the wooded land for each subsequent

²⁸In traditional Korea all public appropriations were made in terms of the rent of the land which was paid in kind. The same also applied to the official stipend. The Korean sources, however, do not take the trouble to explain that it is not the land itself but the rent from it that is allocated. This is understood; or, at least, it is assumed by the sources. For the sake of convenience, hereafter, I will follow the practice of the sources and indicate only the amount of land--without specifying the rent from it--allocated. Kyŏl is a unit of land measurement used in traditional Korea. It is believed that one kyŏl was equal to 33 square po of land that yielded about 10-20 sŏk of rice depending on the quality of land. Although the exact amount of all these units seems to have varied from time to time throughout history, in modern measurement one po is about six feet square and one sŏk is about five bushels. Kim Sang-gi, Koryŏsidaesa (Seoul: Tonggukmunhwa-sa, 1961), pp. 304, 313.

grade is observable for all eighteen grades; whereas for the farm land the same deduction is applied only to the fourteenth grade, and for the lower grades the difference becomes only three kyōl except for the eighteenth grade, which has a difference of four kyōl from the seventeenth grade.

The crimson garb, however, received three separate scales on the basis of its service classifications of the munban, the muban, and the chabōp and each of these three groups was scaled down into different number of grades. The civil officials (munban) of the crimson garb were thus made up of a set of ten grades with the stipend ranging from the highest rate of the farm land of 65 kyōl and the wooded land of 55 kyōl to the lowest rate of the farm land of 30 kyōl and the wooded land of 18 kyōl. The difference between each grade in this group is again five kyōl of the farm land for the first five grades and three kyōl of the farm land for the remaining five lower grades, whereas for the wooded land, the five kyōl difference was limited to the first three grades and the three kyōl difference was then applied to the rest of the grades, with the exception of the sixth grade, which had nine kyōl less than the fifth grade. In the case of the military officials (muban) of the crimson garb, the scale was made up of a set of only five grades, each grade possessing the same stipend as in the case of the first five grades of the civil officials. The scale for the officials of the miscellaneous category (chabōp) in the crimson garb was the same as the scale of the civil officials, with the exception of two grades:

the first grade of the former classification received sixty kyōl of farm land, the equivalent amount given to the second grade of the latter classification, plus fifty-five kyōl of wooded land, the equivalent amount received by the third grade of the latter classification; and no stipend was listed for the second grade of the miscellaneous classification.

The two remaining lower garbs, the red and the green, were classified into only the civil and miscellaneous officials and no explanation was given for the notable omission of the military officials in these lower groups. As for the scales of the two lower garbs, a few points are worth mentioning here. First of all, the officials of the red garb received a set of only eight grades, whereas those of the green garb received a set of ten grades. Secondly, the stipend between each grade in both garbs was scaled down with a difference of two to three kyōl, with only a few exceptions, instead of the usual five kyōl difference of the higher garbs. Thirdly, between the highest stipends of the civil officials of the two garbs, there was a difference of five kyōl each of farm and wooded land, but both garbs listed no first grade stipend for the miscellaneous classification.

Below the scales of the four garbs were the stipends of the general underlings (chamni) who apparently received less than the lowest grade in the official stipend scale. Their stipend was merely stated as being determined by their individual quality (inp'um). In addition to the stipend of the underlings, there was another stipend grade

for those who had yet no regular official ranks eligible for the stipend scale as of 976, and they were uniformly given fifteen kyōl of farm land.²⁹

One of the most interesting points about the official stipend scale of 976 is that the military officials as a whole undoubtedly received a better stipend than either the civil or the miscellaneous officials. To begin with, a comparison of the stipends by the three service classifications of the crimson garb gives a much higher average for the military officials than for either the civil or miscellaneous officials. Although the stipend of each individual grade for the military officials does not look very different from that of its counterparts in the other two classifications, the average stipend of the military official is actually higher by one-fifth than that of either the civil or the miscellaneous officials in the same garb. Thus, we find the average of the military classification is 101.2 kyōl while that of the civil classification is only 80.6 kyōl. Secondly, the fact that the two lowest garbs were applied only to the civil and miscellaneous classifications, not to the military classifications, indicates the higher status of the military officials.

The better treatment of military officials in relation to civil and miscellaneous officials might well have been a manifestation of the concessions made by King Chu to the military families as part of the redress for their loss under

²⁹KRS 78:8b.

King So's suppression. However, we need not take this to mean a complete restoration of the military position to its old superior status. Nor did the reaction against King So's policy indicate a complete reversal of the repression of the independent military power in Koryŏ. The trend to contain the autonomous military power and to downgrade the military officials was implicitly maintained in the official stipend scale of 976. The fact that the once autonomous military leaders were now subjected to a regulated scale of income set by the central government indicates the successful curtailment of their power. This trend was not only kept but it gained momentum as each change occurred in the official stipend scale until the scale revised in 998 gave the military officials a lower rate than the civil officials. (See p.185 f.)

At the same time, the position of the newcomers in the central government seems to have been reassured in the stipend scale of 976. In all probability, the newcomers, who were mostly mere functionaries, were grouped together in the two lower red and green garbs. This modest start of the new functionaries is important, however, because it was a formal acknowledgment by the new government of the need to accommodate them in the Koryŏ officialdom to continue the centralization policy of King So.

The need to accommodate in the official stipend scale of 976 both the once-purged powerful families and the newly recruited functionaries seems to have created a very fluid situation in the new government. This is indicated by an

unusual provision in the stipend scale which made the individual official's quality (inp'um) as the basis of his stipend rate, instead of his relative rank in the official hierarchy. The precise meaning of "the individual quality," however, is unclear. But the fact that it replaced the official ranking as the basis of the salary determinant suggests that an important change had been made in the treatment of the officials. One possible explanation for this is that the new device was used by the government to manipulate the two different groups in the officialdom so as to strengthen its own position in the process. If this was the case, the difference in the rate of income between different grades in the same garb must have been substantial enough to make a significant difference in income for those officials who were willing to subject themselves to such manipulation. As we have seen earlier, the difference between the two consecutive grades in the same garb was less than five kyōl.

A more significant difference, however, is found between the stipend of higher grades of the purple garb and those of the other three garbs. The first grade in the purple garb received a stipend about twice as much as that of the first grade of the other three garbs. The difference in kyōl between them varied from forty-five to seventy-five. The stipend of the highest grade holder of the second group, the crimson garb, therefore was the same rate in farm land as the tenth grade of the purple and in wooded land it was the same as the twelfth grade of the purple garb. The same comparison

could be made with the other garbs. Furthermore, if we take the average of the three highest grades of the purple garb and compare it with that of the three lowest grades of the green garb, the ratio is a little more than five to one in farm land and exactly eleven to one in wooded land. On the other hand, if we make the same comparison with the three lowest grades in the purple garb, the ratio drops down to three to one in farm land and three and a half to one in wooded land. It should be pointed out that for the higher grade officials, the income from this particular source was often only a part of their regular total income; but for the lower grades, it was probably the only income they had. As shall be seen later, the officials with meritorious records or with higher ranks, had another regular income from the kongŭm-jŏn. (See p.218 ff.)

The unmistakably higher income--relative to the income of the other garbs--of the purple garb officials leads us to ask the question: Who belonged to the purple garb? Moreover, what was the basis of the differentiation of the officials into four different garbs? Were they only to distinguish the relative importance of the ranks of the officials in the government as in the case of China? Or were they based upon something else peculiar to Koryŏ? Could it have been, for example, the difference in their social status which defined their official garb, as was the case in Silla? The grading system and the corresponding stipend structure of the scale make it quite clear that the use of the official garb in Koryŏ was different from that in China and if anything it was

closer to the Silla usage--that is, it was the Koryŏ version of the Silla kolp'um system. The basis of this possibility is found in the striking similarity between the structure of the Koryŏ official hierarchy shown in the stipend scale of 976 and that of the Silla official hierarchy shown in the seventeen-grade rank system. (See Charts I and II.) In both cases, the officials were grouped into four separate strata, each of which was represented by an assigned color for the official garb and received a separate grading or ranking system. Yet the evidence for the similarity is admittedly incomplete and this explanation remains only as a strong possibility. For we have unfortunately no concrete evidence to believe that the color of the official garb in Koryŏ represented a rigid social stratum in its ruling class as it did in Silla. Nevertheless, on the strength of some similarities which have been expounded above, this writer assumes that the purple garb was given mainly to those officials who rose during the days of founding the dynasty under Wang Kŏn and who then later became the objects of the purge by King So; the other garbs, then, were given to the remaining officials, especially to the newcomers after the purge. This assumption is also based upon the circumstances under which the stipend scale of 976 was proclaimed. For, if the assumption is correct, the scale would have resolved the problems of satisfying the victims of the purge by putting them in the highest bracket of the stipend scale and at the same time it would have accommodated the newcomers in the officialdom with a solid foundation.

The All Grades Land-rent and Fuel-wood Scale of 976 also shows several important new features about the Koryŏ officials which were significant in the development of the Koryŏ yangban system. Aside from the officials' stipend rates, the scale tells us that the officials were, for the first time in Korea, classified into three service branches of the government--the civil service (munban), the military service (muban), and the miscellaneous service (chabŏp). Interestingly, all three classifications were found only in the officials of the crimson garb--the second highest income group of the four garbs. The officials of the purple garb were not classified at all whereas the officials of the red and green garbs were classified into the civil and miscellaneous categories. The reasons for this strange differentiation are not given in the Koryŏsa and we are left to our speculation. For one thing, the exclusion of the purple garb from the three classifications logically must have been due to one of two reasons: that the officials of this garb had a uniform rate of stipend either in spite of their service classifications, or because they had no distinction of service classifications at all. Evidence tends to suggest that they had service classifications of only the two kinds, the civil and military services.³⁰ In the case of the red and green garbs, it seems certain--in the absence of any contrary evidence--that the military officials were excluded

³⁰ KRS 85:6a.

from the two lower groups.

Among the three services, then, the military certainly enjoyed the highest income status; then came the civil service with its next best status; while the miscellaneous service obviously occupied the lowest income status in the stipend scale of 976. Such an order in the economic status of the official class actually corresponds to the reality of their economic strengths in the early days of the dynasty. It should be remembered that the military leaders were among the largest slave owners in Koryŏ before the enactment of the Slave Investigation Act of 956. Yet a question still remains to be answered in regard to the nature of the miscellaneous service. Who were the chabŏp officials? What were their official functions in the government? Why did they receive the lowest income status in the officialdom?

The offices which were cited as the examples of the chabŏp group in the Koryŏsa are the Chŏnjung, the Sach'ŏn, the Yŏnsu, and the Sangsŏn-wŏn. Again, the Koryŏsa fails to give us the exact functions of these offices at the time of King Chu. We can guess the functions, however, in the light of the functions of similarly titled offices which existed in Korea before and after this period, as well as by the functions of their counterparts in T'ang China, from which the Koreans borrowed their nomenclatures. First of all, the Chŏnjung should have been the successor of the Silla Chŏnjung-sŏng. Although the function of the Silla office is unknown to us, the Tien-chung-sheng in T'ang, from which Silla

borrowed its office, was the office in charge of the domestic service of the emperor.³¹ Yet, in early eleventh century Koryŏ, the office under the same name was in charge of the royal clan register. In any case, this office must have had something to do with the family affairs of the dynastic ruling house. The second office, the Sach'ŏn, should have been what later came to be known as the Sanch'ŏn-dae. The term Sach'ŏn-dae first appears in Koryŏ in 1023 when the T'aebok-kam was so named. This office was in charge of astrology and calendar making as was the like-titled office in T'ang China.³² The third office, the Yŏnsu, does not appear in any place other than that cited above. But from the literal meaning of the word we can surmise that this office had something to do with longevity or medicine; it might well have been in charge of medical care for the royal family. The last office, the Sangsŏn-wŏn, was obviously in charge of the royal diet. All four offices, in other words, had duties which were somehow connected with the personal affairs of the king, which required a specialized skill in such fields as medicine, astrology, divination, rituals, dietetics, etc.

These official functions of the chabŏp group would certainly have made them among the closest officials to the king. At least two appointees to the chabŏp duties in this early time are known to us; and they confirm this belief.

³¹Robert Des Rotours, Traite des Fonctionnaires et Traite de L'armee (Leyden, 1947), pp. 217-240.

³²Ibid., p. 208.

One is Ch'oe Chi-mong, who held an office in the T'aebok-kam during the reign of King Mu, and the other is Su-yŏ, a holder of the fourth grade rank, who was appointed to the Administrator of the Royal Kitchen in 975.³³ Ch'oe had the confidence of all the first five Koryŏ kings at one time or another and he served under them as if he were a personal retainer of the ruling house. Su-yŏ is specifically mentioned as a kŏnsin. Why would the closest royal retainers then get a relatively lower income status? The answer may be found in the relative weakness of the royal power in Korea. It is interesting to note that the chabŏp service later disappeared as an independent service and it was absorbed by the civil service with the establishment of the yangban system. In any case, in the official stipend scale of 976 we find the definite beginning for the germination of the Koryŏ yangban system. And we must give credit to King So for its inception although it gained real momentum after his death.

Even more significant in its consequences was the introduction of the hunjŏn (the meritorious land) in the spring of 977, only four months after the announcement of the official stipend scale of 976. By this special act, the meritorious subjects at founding of the dynasty and the sŏngjus who voluntarily joined the new dynasty were given a grant of farm land ranging from twenty kyŏl to fifty kyŏl.³⁴ The significance

³³KRS 2:33b.

³⁴KRS 78:15a.

of this grant perhaps was not so much the amount of income provided by it as it was the heritable nature of the land grant. The fact that the title for the hunjŏn grant was made heritable to the descendants was obviously a significant concession to the powerful families by King Chu. Its obvious aim was to immutably restore a portion of the economic power they had previously possessed. The inclusion of the sŏngjus among the beneficiaries of this new provision was consistent with the policy of accommodating the autonomous local authorities by the central government.

The meritorious land grant set a Koryŏ precedent in providing a special economic privilege to the selected few. The precedent was later copied and broadened by the protected official stipend scale of 1049 in order to enrich higher echelons in the officialdom even though it apparently violated the principle of the state ownership of land in the Koryŏ land system. Because of its heritable nature, the hunjŏn type of official income provision was bound to increase and benefit the specially privileged yangban class until it came to undermine the foundation of the Koryŏ land system.

CHAPTER V

THE CURRENT OF THOUGHT

The Significance of Ch'oe Sŭng-no

In the two decades following 976, Koryŏ took a big step forward in centralizing the government authority and in organizing the central officialdom to exercise that authority. This was carried out in a series of measures under the leadership of King Ch'i (Sŏng-jong). The measures were largely inspired by the Chinese system and they were generally aimed at strengthening the central control over the autonomous local authorities.

King Ch'i, one of the ablest Koryŏ kings, succeeded to the throne as a young man of twenty-two se when King Chu died in 981.¹ The young king was intellectually a product of the Silla Confucian scholarship. He was educated by Ch'oe Yang, a Silla aristocratic descendant who entered the Koryŏ government service after his successful civil service examination during the reign of King So.² Even after he ascended to the throne, the young king actively sought the

¹When King Chu died leaving only an infant son behind him, his cousin Ch'i was picked to succeed him. Ch'i's father, Prince Uk, was one of Wang Kŏn's older sons and had the same mother as King So's queen. This, of course, means that King Chu and Ch'i had the identical grand-parents. In fact, when Ch'i's mother died at an early age, young Ch'i was reared by his grandmother who lived until a year after Ch'i's coronation in 981. KRS 88:3b-5b; 90:2a.

²KRS 93:23b-24a.

counsel of his tutor and friend-Ch'oe Yang and the like-minded scholar-officials. In fact, under his sponsorship, these scholar-officials carried out a vigorous program of government reorganization along the lines of Chinese imperial centralism and laid out the basic structure of the government in Koryŏ, in which the yangban was to play an important role. The ideas of these men on important questions of the government and society played a crucial part in shaping the form and substance of the early Koryŏ government. An attempt to analyze their thoughts, therefore, will help us to understand the current of thought which determined the course of the new dynasty in these formative years.

Unfortunately, however, we face the problem of inadequate source materials in answering this important question. The Koryŏsa, our major source, treats only a few of the architects of the early Koryŏ government in its biographical section. And the contents of this section consist merely of terse biographical sketches rarely of any use in understanding the thought of the period. The only important exception to this is Ch'oe Sŭng-no's biography which contains a lengthy memorial that he submitted to King Ch'i in 982. His memorial, one of the best ever written by a Koryŏ official, is in fact the only surviving source from which we can explore the thought of the time. Essentially it reviews the major policies of the first five Koryŏ kings, who preceded King Ch'i, and then it makes a series of twenty-eight policy recommendations--six of them missing in the Koryŏsa--on the major issues

of the time. What makes the memorial an important historical document is that it contains a first-hand report on the political development of the critical decades of the new dynasty by an observer who not only lived through these decades, but who as a high official also found himself right in the middle of the turmoil. In addition, Sŭng-no examined all of the outstanding problems of the kingdom which King Ch'i had just inherited from his predecessor and Sŭng-no expresses his views on these problems. It is this first-hand observation that makes the memorial a valuable historical source from which we can construct some semblance of the political thought of the time.³

Ch'oe Sŭng-no was born to a Silla aristocratic family. His father, Un-ham, was a Silla official but he also served

³For the views of the rest of the architects of the early Koryŏ government the scanty sources enable us only to note that they seem to have had much in common with Ch'oe Sŭng-no in their political outlook. This is particularly true for the four men who along with Ch'oe Sŭng-no shared the honor of having their names placed in the royal tabernacle for King Ch'i. They are Ch'oe Yang, Sŏ Hŭi, Yi Mong-yu, and Yi Chi-baek. They all had highly successful political careers which apparently owed just as much to their excellent social and educational backgrounds as they did to their individual talent. Like Ch'oe Sŭng-no, they all invariably became officials of high ranks occupying important positions under King Ch'i; in all probability they came from former Silla aristocratic families which rose to political pre-eminence under the new dynasty; and they all had an excellent Confucian education. In the light of the inadequate sources the similarities in their backgrounds would seem to justify the selection of Ch'oe Sŭng-no as a representative of these statesmen. A careful study of his thought as expressed in the memorial should then give us some understanding of their thoughts which apparently constituted the main current of the time. KRS 60:34ab; 93:2a-22b, 23b, 24b, 30a-31b.

under Wang Kŏn, rising to the fourth grade Wŏnbo. When Sŭng-no was only twelve se, he was given the honor of a royal audience before Wang Kŏn. On this occasion, the boy so impressed the king with his unusual ability to read Lun-yü⁴ that the king admitted him into the Wŏnbong-sŏng, the forerunner of the Hanlin Academy in Koryŏ, as a government student with a regular official stipend. His official life thus initiated, according to the Koryŏsa, he was soon entrusted with the authority of drafting royal decrees.⁴

After this the Koryŏsa is silent on his official career until he submitted his famous memorial to King Ch'i in 982 in response to Ch'i's call to all central officials above the fifth grade rank for their opinions on the current affairs of the state. Sŭng-no, then 56 se, already held the second grade rank of Chŏnggwang and the second highest title of the Sangjuguk and he occupied the important position of Acting Minister of Personnel (Haeng Sŏngwan-ŏsa). It is probable, however, that he was promoted to this rank and title after King Ch'i assumed the reign of the kingdom in 981. The reason to believe that his political career made its last big jump to the apex of power only after King Ch'i ascended the throne is found in the probable connection which Sŭng-no maintained with Ch'oe Yang, King Ch'i's teacher and confidential political advisor. Yang and Sŭng-no shared the same surname, the same native town in the old Silla capital,

⁴KRS 93:2b.

Kyŏngju, and the same Silla aristocratic background. Both Sŭng-no and Yang were known for their excellent literary accomplishment and later they worked closely together under King Ch'i as the king's most trusted advisors. It may be that Sŭng-no's sudden rise to a position of high honor and power initially owed much to Yang's assistance.

Soon after the memorial King Ch'i appointed Sŭng-no to the powerful position of Executive of the Chancellery (Munha-sirang-p'yŏngjangsa).⁵ In this capacity Sŭng-no was able to undertake many far-reaching changes in the Koryŏ government along the lines he had proposed in his memorial. There is no doubt that he had the king's confidence and support for these important undertakings. Moreover, the king later appointed him to the all-powerful position of the Custodial Chancellery (Munha-su-sijung) of the royal government. The king's utmost reliance on Sŭng-no's advice is seen, for example, in the abandonment of the Buddhist ritual in his court. Although King Ch'i seems to have planned on his ascent to the throne to reinstitute some of the Buddhist rituals--which King So initiated, but which apparently were abandoned by King Chu subsequently--King Ch'i never reinstated them during his reign. In all probability the king dropped his plan after he had been persuaded by Sŭng-no's suggestion to cease these rituals.

⁵In translating the Koryŏ official titles into English, the present writer, for the lack of any better translation, has in most cases followed Professor Kracke's translation of Sung titles. When a corresponding Koryŏ organ is known to have been significantly different from the Sung organ, he did not hesitate to make proper changes to Kracke's translation. See E. A. Kracke, Jr. Translations of Sung Civil Service Titles, Classification Terms, and Government Organ Names (Paris, 1957).

In fact, even after Süng-no's death in 990, the king had his officials carry out one innovation after another which either Süng-no explicitly proposed in his memorial--such as the establishment of twelve provincial governors in 983--or which he implicitly suggested--for example, the reorganization of the central government modeled after the T'ang government system. We shall now turn to the actual examination of his memorial.

The Review of the Past Policies.

After the initial statement, Süng-no's memorial starts with an analogy of what he was going to write in the memorial and Wu Ching's *The Chen-kuan Cheng-yao*. It is obvious that by this analogy, he was putting himself in the shoes of Wu Ching. His memorial says in fact at the conclusion of his policy review that if King Ch'i could follow the Koryŏ founder's wise policies, which Süng-no praised highly in the memorial, it would not be different from Hsüan-tsung's following of T'ang T'ai-tsung's conduct of government.

The memorial then reviews the achievements of Wang Kŏn. It justifies all of the founder's policies. The founding of the Koryŏ is justified on the ground that Wang Kŏn secured the Mandate of Heaven through his virtuous conduct. It praises highly the founder's "righteous" actions against Koryŏ's enemies such as Kitan and Hu-bækche, and it praises the founder's display of "benevolence" to the weak and submissive from Po-hai and Silla. The memorial also praises

the founder for the establishment of proper relationships with the neighboring countries and for his austere life, his intelligence, and his polite, courteous manner. In addition to these, it also mentions the founder's ability to choose the right men for the right posts in the government. Wang Kōn, according to Sūng-no, never let the able waste their talents; nor did he hesitate to entrust his officials with the authorities of the government. Wang Kōn revered the Buddhist teachings; but at the same time he placed equal emphasis on the Confucian teachings. The only thing the memorial regrets of Wang Kōn's rule is that his reign did not last long enough to see the perfection of all the systems he had instituted. The government that Wang Kōn left behind him, Sūng-no says, lacked many of the instruments necessary to be a perfectly good government. But, at such an early stage of the new dynasty he says that this was inevitable.

The flowery statements of praise on the policies of the founder of the dynasty may be the expressions of Sūng-no's genuine beliefs on the validity of the founder's policy and on the worthy qualities of the man. But at the same time one cannot help suspecting that Sūng-no as an official of the ex-Silla aristocratic background would have found ample reasons for a need to convince his new lord, King Ch'i, of his faith and loyalty to the new dynasty of Koryō. His main aim in the review of Wang Kōn's policies might very well have been to convince King Ch'i of the sincerity of his loyalty and faith in the new dynasty beyond any reproach at

the outset of his memorial. What he says of Wang Kōn is, in effect, that the man was sufficiently worthy of becoming the founder of a new dynasty because of the many virtues he possessed. After having done this, Sūng-no apparently felt himself more free to criticize the actions of Wang Kōn's successors.

On the policies of King Mu and Chu, the memorial makes relatively brief remarks, probably due to their short reigns. Of the comment on King Mu, two things seem to deserve our attention. One is a favorable comment on Mu's treatment of the people and the other point is his criticism of Mu's excessive concern for personal safety. While Mu was still the crown prince, according to Sūng-no, he had mannerisms which were commendable. His respect for the teachers and his courtesy toward the visitors and associates were widely acclaimed among the people. Moreover, Mu as the king surprised everybody with his candid observance of propriety when he turned a deaf ear to Wang Kyu's slander of Prince Yo and showed his brotherly love and trust to the prince by giving his daughter in marriage.

What we should note here is the tone of Sūng-no's expression which is Confucian except for certain Korean overtones. Sūng-no praised Mu's conduct from the viewpoint of the Confucian concept of li. Respect for teachers, courtesy toward associates, and brotherly love are all too familiar Confucian principles, but giving the king's daughter to his half-brother, a purely Korean custom, is certainly not the

Confucian practice. Sŭng-no's condonation of such a non-Confucian practice as endogamy casts serious doubts on the nature of his Confucianism. Undoubtedly his commitment to Confucianism was sufficiently flexible to accommodate the indigenous customs even if they contained elements contradictory to the Confucian precepts.

Sŭng-no's criticism of King Mu in the memorial concerns the latter's behavior during the first succession struggle of 945. The memorial accuses Mu for ineptitude during the crisis in fear of his personal safety. The king is criticized for surrounding himself with unworthy "small men of the countryside" and "armed officials" at guard and for keeping the worthy "court officials and able men" away from him.⁶ Moreover, it says that the king failed to maintain impartiality in the treatment of the officials and he lost the prestige of the throne in the eyes of the subjects.

It is obvious that these accusations reflected Sŭng-no's partisan position in the bitter power struggle of the time. But what we should note again is the apparent Confucian tone of Sŭng-no's expression. It is the duty of the ruler to seek only the counsel of the worthy officials on the state affairs even at the adverse moment of a crisis as in 945. It is all too clear that Sŭng-no was merely using the Confucian precepts to disguise his partisan accusation against King Mu, the main figure in his opposition camp.

⁶KRS 93:6ab.

Sŭng-no's Confucian expressions are meaningless unless they are seen in the light of the political reality, especially in the light of his political commitment in Koryŏ at the time. This point comes out even more clearly when the memorial expresses his view on Prince Yo's activities at the time.

Understandably Prince Yo's action is praised in approving words. The memorial gives full credit to the prince for detecting Wang Kyu's usurpation plot and for securing the aid of General Wang Sig-yŏm to intervene in order to protect the prince's proper succession to the throne. It even mentions the massacre of the prince's opponents approvingly. King Yo is also praised for his diligence in attending to state affairs and in seeking the counsel of the officials after he ascended the throne. In fact, the only thing that made Sŭng-no condemn the king was his decision to move the capital to Pyŏngyang. The memorial asserts that the king was misguided in this decision by a prognostication of the toch'am (tu-ch'an in Chinese). The king's stubborn insistence on continuing at great cost the construction of the new capital is blamed for his ultimate unpopularity. It seems clear now that Sŭng-no used the memorial as an occasion to advance his partisan interests.

After discussing King Yo, the memorial moves on to review King So's policies. It says that King So did not try to curry the favor of the royal relatives and the nobles; he always checked the powerful without neglecting the mean

and helpless. After his employment of Shuang Chi, however, his confidence in Shuang resulted in an excessive reliance on the Chinese advisor and he began to advance untalented men in unfair promotions and appointments. "Thereupon, mediocrities of south and north competed to place themselves at the king's service. Without regard to their wisdom or talent, the king received them all with utmost favor and courtesy. As a result, there was a constant struggle for advancement among the officials. The old virtue of the king gradually disappeared. Although he had attached great importance to the Chinese institutions, he did not take the best out of the Chinese system; although he accorded honor to Chinese scholars, he did not obtain the most preeminent talents of China..."⁷

In addition, the memorial mentions King So's excessive indulgence in the Buddhist rituals. The king is criticized for his immoderate dissipation of religious faith, his extravagant indulgence in the pursuit of religious prayers and offerings, and his pleasure-seeking activities. It charges that King So's one-year expenditure was as much as Wang Kōn's ten-year expenditure. The last sixteen years of the king's rule, starting from the purge of 960, is labeled as a period of misrule. During this period, the king is said to have replaced the eminent generals and the high court officials with "the unworthy and unknown" in the government,

⁷KRS 93:7b-8a.

and then he executed the generals and officials in a wholesale manner when they resisted his policy. These actions of the king were unworthy of him and the crown and detrimental to the interest of the dynasty.

Finally, in the review of King Chu's policy, the memorial mentions the king's unhappy childhood. He was born in an atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy amid the power struggle in the court. The child was brought up "by the hands of the women in the deep inner-court" far removed from the fierce political reality of his day.⁸ Although the boy, we are told, had no opportunity to learn much of anything that went on outside the palace gate, he was by nature an intelligent boy.

The memorial praises the young monarch for his action to redeem the oppressed powerful families after he ascended to the throne, but it condemns King Chu for his excessive dependence on the very people whom his father had tried to eliminate previously. Sŭng-no's memorial, as a matter of fact, attributes the basic cause of King Chu's misrule to his complete relegation of power to the hands of the powerful families in the last years of his reign.

Let us try to summarize what has emerged from Sŭng-no's review of the first five Koryŏ kings' policies: (1) He constantly applied the Confucian political concepts to pass judgment on the achievements of the Koryŏ kings. Yet his application was neither consistent nor a strictly orthodox

⁸KRS 93:9a.

one. In fact, often his own political interests lay behind his judgments, which were frequently inimical to the Confucian precepts. He was basically a Korean who could speak the language of Chinese Confucianists and he used that language in his review of the records of the first five Koryŏ kings. His application of the Confucian moral concept of history in the review, therefore, was often in order to justify his partisan political interests and not necessarily to base the Koryŏ policy entirely on the Confucian precept. (2) His memorial indicates that he, as a second generation Silla aristocrat in Koryŏ, completely accepted the legitimacy of the Wang dynasty in Korea as the successor of the Silla Kingdom. In fact, he was very eager in the memorial to prove that he was a dedicated and loyal subject to the new dynasty. (3) Even though his intellectual commitment to the Confucian political ideals was either academic or superficial, he based his argument on the Confucian doctrine that the country should have an enlightened and virtuous king surrounded by the erudite and worthy ministers. In his mind, the government under T'ang T'ai-tsung in China embodied such doctrine and he seemed to have looked up to it as the model for Koryŏ. With these general descriptions of the first part of his memorial, we shall now move to the second part in which he attempts to offer solutions to the problems of his day.

The Question of Buddhism

The question on which Sŭng-no's memorial dwells most

extensively concerns the Buddhist activities of the time. His basic attitude toward Buddhism is clearly stated when he compares it with Confucianism. He says:

"One who practices Buddhism is at the essence of self-cultivation and one who practices Confucianism is at the essence of managing a country. Cultivation of self is the asset for the after-life; but the management of a country is the task of today (this life). This life (today) is the closest and life after death is the remotest. To put away the closest and to seek the remotest, how couldn't it be an error?"⁹

The main aim of his memorial on this question was apparently not to condemn Buddhism as a religion, but rather to clarify the different functions of Buddhism and Confucianism in society. Therefore, in the same passage he also says:

"Although faith in the creed of Buddhism itself is not an evil, the religious activities of the king, officials, and others which are consecrated to their atonement are not really the same thing.

"If the common people toil with their own strength and spend with their own wealth, harm does not reach to others. However, in the case of a ruler, he toils with the people's labor and spends with the people's wealth."¹⁰

He tried to point out the futility of pious wishes and religious offerings by the devotees of the Buddhism in order to attain their worldly goals. His memorial reminds them that the religious ceremonies are not by themselves the answer to the problem of the reality. Furthermore, expenses involved in these religious sacrifices are borne by the people when they are conducted by the government, and they only add to

⁹ KRS 93:19a.

¹⁰ KRS 93:18b.

the burden of the people. Not only that, the Buddhist view of predestination flatly contradicts the professed objectives which these religious sacrifices seek to achieve.

"I understand that fortune and misfortune, and the noble and the mean are all endowed in the beginning of life, and that they ought to be obediently accepted. Still more, isn't the worshiper of the Buddha's teaching only sowing seeds for the cause of the life after death? The essence of government clearly insists on seeing its concrete, beneficial result. I fear this is not found in this religion."¹¹

Although Süng-no did not seem to disapprove of the spiritual value of Buddhism, particularly for man's self-cultivation, he firmly repudiated the idea that the devotion to Buddhist creed would by itself promote the welfare of the society. In other words, Buddhism offered only spiritual value to the betterment of life and sought no immediate solution to the practical problems of life. On the other hand, Confucianism, according to Süng-no, was basically geared to solve practical problems of life in this world. The functions of the two teachings, therefore, should be understood discriminately and applied accordingly. The responsibility of the ruler as the head of the kingdom, Süng-no asserted, demanded of him a diligent attendance to the political duties of the nation and not just to the religious duties. On performing the political duties he should divorce himself from religious complications as much as possible.

Süng-no's concern for the functions of Buddhism and Confucianism was not a mere philosophical exercise on his part, but it stemmed from the hard reality of his day.

¹¹KRS 93:18b-19a.

Already in Sŭng-no's lifetime, Koryŏ had become increasingly dependent upon Buddhism for its dynastic well-being. Sŭng-no witnessed growing extravagance and abuses by the Buddhist clergy, particularly after the late years of King So's reign. He saw in the unrestrained activities and influence of the thriving Buddhist clergy a clear menace to the position of the Confucian scholar-officials like himself. He observed that the Koryŏ kings in the past tended to spend too much of their time in attending the religious functions at the sacrifice of their political duties. He requested in the memorial that the year be divided into four three-month periods and in the first and third periods--from February to April and from August to October--the king should attend to both political and religious duties by dividing his time equally between them. In the other three-month periods, he should devote his time entirely to attending only the political duties in the court.

The first of his proposed measures to check the growing political and economic power of the Buddhist clergy was therefore to curtail sharply the royal attendance at religious functions. King Ch'i, as already mentioned, apparently intended to keep the religious ceremonies established by his predecessors of making offerings for the consecrated atonement (kongdŏk-che) and of personally grinding tea leaves and wheat to be used for religious ceremonies.¹² Sŭng-no's memorial,

¹²Ninomiya Keinin, "Kōrai-chō no Saikai ni Tsuite," Chōsen-gakuhō, Combined issue of Vols. XXI and XXII (Oct., 1961), pp. 228-230.

however, advises the king against resuming these religious duties. It says that King So, who initiated all these ceremonies after the promiscuous prosecution of his political enemies, was led astray into the belief that he would expiate his sins by making extravagant Buddhist atonement sacrifices. But, the result of King So's unrestrained devotion to the Buddhist ceremonies, Sŭng-no argued, was only to make the people bear heavier burdens than before without any beneficial return. It only gave the people more reasons to decry their heavy burdens. Although Sŭng-no qualified his opposition by saying that King Ch'i's intended sacrifices were not exactly the same as King So's, nevertheless, he left no doubt that the result would be the same. In distinct terms he requested the king to abandon the planned rituals. He even advised the king to cancel the contemplated distribution of food items for charity purposes in imitation of King So's action. Instead of these wasteful activities, he urged the king to undertake immediately the rectification of reward and punishment by curbing all the evil conduct and by exhorting all the good conduct. This, he asserted, was sufficient to bring the utmost blessing in the country. He also pointed out that the frequency of sacrificial offering was not essential to the command of blessings from heaven, but that too frequent offerings would be just a waste and would result only in a heavier extraction from the people since all their expenses were ultimately borne by the people.

As another proposal to curtail the Buddhist activities,

Sŭng-no requested the prohibition of loan activities by the Buddhist monasteries. He pointed out the harm of the widely practiced temple loan by the monasteries. The temple po was originally a fund in the form of the land-rent endowed by the government to the Buddhist monasteries for their expenses. The monasteries, however, soon used this fund to make loans with a high interest.¹³ Obviously in these loans the monasteries made a great profit at the expense of impoverished borrowers. Sŭng-no proposed a complete and immediate prohibition of all temple lendings by freezing all temple funds in the monastic estates.

Sŭng-no made a vigorous objection to King Ch'i's pending invitation to Zen Monk Yŏ-ch'ŏl to come to the court.¹⁴ Conceding that the monk was a man of sufficient virtue to bring blessings to the people, he nonetheless saw no reason that the king should bring him into court when he could perform the same duty in the temple where he belonged. Here again, Sŭng-no cited a precedent which took place in King So's reign. A certain Monk Sŏn-hoe was said to have entered a monastic life in order to dodge corvee labor duty. Sŭng-no charged that later he became one of King So's highly respected priests and on many occasions the king consulted him on important matters. In the end, however, the priest was said

¹³The interest rate set by the Koryŏ government in 980 was one-third percent for each tu if the principal was rice and one-half percent for each pu if it was cloth material.

¹⁴KRS 93:14a f.

to have died on the road presumably while engaged in a religious mission. And then Sŭng-no wrote, "If the monk could not prevent such a misfortune falling upon himself, how would he have the power to bring blessings to the people?" In Sŭng-no's argument, one detects an open attack against the Buddhists' claim that they had the power to invoke the divine intervention. One also detects in his overt rebuttal to the monk's claimed power, an awareness of a potential threat which might come from such a confident monk in the court to the position of the Confucian scholar-official like himself. Undoubtedly, the Buddhist clergy, with their religious authority, posed to the scholar-officials a serious political rivalry which was threatening the sanctuary of the Confucianists in the government. This becomes more convincing when we consider the power and influence of the Buddhist clergy in the Koryŏ society at this time.

One of the abuses of the Buddhist clergy which Sŭng-no strongly urged the king to prohibit was the monks' free use of public transportation and lodging facilities. Sŭng-no asserted that the clergy used these facilities when they went around to exact religious donations from the people with tacit assistance of the local authorities. Because of their semi-official status, the Buddhist monks were given not only the privilege of free public facilities but also the official blessing for religious donations. In exacting donation, they seem to have resorted often to means of extortion through the use of their religious authorities. It is not difficult

to imagine that a monk in exacting donations from innocent people would abuse his religious authority, and that the people out of their deep religious beliefs would easily fall into a sly monk's intimidation. Moreover, the local authorities seem to have competed with each other to win the clergy's favor in the belief that it would bring the Buddha's blessing to them. Sŭng-no pointed out in the memorial that even when the people were suspicious of the clergy's motive, they dared not say anything because they feared the clergy's reprisal. As a measure to eliminate such abuses Sŭng-no urged the king to deprive the clergy of its privileges of free use of public transportation and lodging facilities.

Sŭng-no also suggested a number of measures to restrict other harmful Buddhist activities and their extravagance. Some of them were promoted as a disguised economy measure; others overtly as a means to check the growing Buddhist influence in the court. One such proposal called for moderation in the indiscriminate mobilization of the peasants to be used for the construction of Buddhist temples and for the preparation of two national Buddhist ceremonies, Yondung and P'alghan celebrations. Sŭng-no also urged the king to curb the growing construction of private residences for monks through the use of corvee laborers recruited by local authorities. He also recommended outlawing the use of precious metals in casting Buddhist statues. These were some of his measures which were aimed at checking the unnecessary extravagance and the mounting influence and power which the Buddhist

clergy had acquired in his day. He was, of course, proposing these measures for the professed aim of relieving the people from the unnecessary and harmful burdens of the religious exactions.

There is no doubt that by this time the Buddhist clergy had already become a very powerful economic group in Koryŏ society, and its appetite for the secular and materialistic things had grown far out of proportion to its clerical requirements. And this was in spite of the monastic rule which prohibited the clergy from the secular pursuit of pleasure and material acquisition. In fact, evidence shows that the Buddhist clergy not only enjoyed a unique prosperity at this time as one of the predominant economic groups in society but also they indulged in some cases in fraudulent pleasure-seeking activities.

The Government Economy and Social Order

The deplorable habit of extravagance by the Buddhists should have been an easy target for Sŭng-no to pick out when the government was feeling a financial strain in the face of continuous military preparations ever since the inception of the dynasty. An urgent need to step up Koryŏ defense preparations, under the increasing possibility of Kitan attack from the north, seems to have made intelligent and able King Ch'i especially susceptible to Sŭng-no's arguments. In fact, some of the proposals in Sŭng-no's memorial directly concerned the growing strain on the government treasury. His main objec-

tive in these proposals was to secure a sufficient revenue for the government through measures of economy in official expenditure and through the exploration of new sources of revenue.

Some of the measures which Sung-no proposed in connection with the curtailment of the extravagant activities of the Buddhist clergy have already been mentioned. Other economy measures he proposed also deserve our attention because of their political and social implications. In particular, he proposed a shift in the policy regarding the palace guards which was initiated by King So. He argued that the existence of a large number of palace guards drained the government treasury unnecessarily and provoked much criticism from all quarters. He urged the king to reduce the size of the guards to the absolute minimum number needed merely to guard the palace. Although King Chu had reduced the number of the guards considerably since the time of King So, Sung-no insisted that the number was still too large. By discharging a large portion of the unnecessary guards, the government would not only save money, but also free itself from criticism.

Apparently, the real aim of this proposal was more than just to save money in the government. The reduction of the palace guards which were built up for the explicit purpose of strengthening the royal position would automatically mean the weakening of the royal power. One suspects his real motive again when he proposed the replacement of the over-

worked central army garrisoned on the northern frontier with the soldiers recruited and commanded by the local military leaders. His professed aim was to relieve the central army from the exhaustion of the prolonged garrison duty, and also to reduce the strain of government military expenditures. Yet, one cannot help but suspect a general tendency in the aims of his economy measures which would, if carried out, favor the position of officials by moving their power in to replace the royal power.

Another economy measure of similar nature he proposed concerned the court slaves. It seems that many court slaves were used at the time as laborers in the construction of temples and other public works, as well as for domestic services in the palace. Sŭng-no charged that King So, in his feverish religious endeavor, initiated the use of these slaves for religious enterprises. Before this, according to Sŭng-no, most of the slaves, except those engaged in domestic service in the palace, had been settled on land just outside the capital as agricultural serfs and the court exacted only taxes from them. He suggested, therefore, a resettlement of these slaves on the land as a move to increase the revenue and to store war provisions in case of Kitan attack. In dealing with this particular issue, Sŭng-no also managed to draw into the argument the issue of the royal stable. He argued that the large stable maintained in the court since King So's days was both uneconomical and ill-devised in breeding high quality horses. He suggested instead

that the horses should have been dispersed to the good breeding grounds in the country. This proposal seemed calculated more to reducing the military strength at the royal disposal than merely saving money and improving the quality of horses.

Under the name of economic austerity Sŭng-no also advanced a strict social differentiation in Koryŏ. Apparently, he was well aware of the fact that much was at stake to the men of his social status in the gradual disintegration of the regulated social order of Silla. He audaciously proposed to regulate the size of the houses and the material and color of clothing for all classes of people. Under his proposal the size of the house and the material and color of clothing were to be determined by one's social status, and not by his economic means. He also called for the restoration of what he called the Sino-Sillanese system of the official attirement.¹⁵ Sŭng-no claimed that the Silla regulation of clothing had been disregarded since the inception of Koryŏ, and that ever since, one's financial ability had become the sole determinant in the choice of clothing. The result was a deplorable situation, he asserted and even an official sometimes could afford no proper attire to wear on the formal occasion. This would become the nation's shame if exposed before the visiting dignitaries from China at the state function. Moreover, the rich and powerful were competitively engaged

¹⁵KRS 93:15b.

in building grandiose residences all over the country. This, according to him, would not only produce the ruinous habit of luxury and extravagance in the material-scarce Korea, but it would also seriously disrupt the social order.

In order to curb these social cancers, he advocated an immediate and effective prohibition of all international trading in Koryŏ except that held on the occasion of the arrival of the official Chinese embassy. Beside the social reasons, he also cited economic reasons against the trade, based on the Confucian belief that trade is a non-productive pursuit, and that cheating and unfair profit-making are inevitable in the process of transactions. He even expressed fear that these unethical activities would invite contempt from the visiting Chinese dignitaries in the country. Here we see a mind trapped in the dogmatic short-sightedness of the Confucian and Sinophilistic beliefs.

Sŭng-no's belief in the strict social differentiation was even more strongly expressed in his denunciation of King So's Slave Examination Act. He argued that by manumitting a large number of the slaves of the formerly established families, the king recklessly contributed to the disturbance of the social tranquility, and that by setting the mean free to humiliate the noble, he only invited the resentment of the nobles, whose service was essential for the dynasty.

On these social questions, Sŭng-no apparently spoke in undisguised terms for the interests of the old powerful

families of Silla aristocratic background. Ever since they became the victims of King So's abortive prosecution, the old families of power and fame had been engaged in a hard uphill fight for a comeback. Evidently many of them had sunk beneath their social status by the time Sŭng-no wrote his memorial. Being intensely proud of their past glories, however, they had apparently become increasingly bitter about their helpless plight. Sŭng-no spoke vividly of their plight when he said that many descendants of the former meritorious subjects, in spite of the frequent issuance of royal edicts to restore their titles, were still left to be mixed with the low-born underlings and to be maltreated by the newcomers in the officialdom. He proposed an immediate conferment of suitable ranks and positions to the depressed heirs of the former meritorious subjects.

Sŭng-no's conservatism on the social questions, however, was due more to his concern over the disintegration of the old Silla social order than to his sympathy for the helpless descendants of the meritorious subjects. He apparently felt that the real danger to their aristocratic position would come from the loss of the old social order rather than from a mere shift of personnel in the aristocratic rank. The newcomers, after all, had the same aristocratic background and shared a common interest in the preservation of the old order. But the rise of a powerful merchant class, for instance, would be a more serious threat to the old social order than the newcomers to the officialdom. The prospect

of the rise of a new class of traders and craftsmen seems to have been real in the Koryŏ of this time. This is evident in the thriving commercial activities of the time. The trade with China became very active since the late Silla, and a similar growth in internal trade was also supported by the introduction of coinage in 996.

Sŭng-no knew that under the monarchical system of Koryŏ, only the king had in his possession legitimate constitutional power to check the advancement of any group which threatened the dynasty's social order. As a Confucian scholar with knowledge of the Chinese government, Sŭng-no was ready to propose a reorganization of the Koryŏ government after the model of the Chinese government system in order to centralize political authority. The centralization under the Confucian system would give the high scholar-officials like himself access to power. Sŭng-no proposed in his memorial an immediate establishment of the centralized local government system in Koryŏ. (King Ch'i subsequently carried out this proposal while Sŭng-no was the Executive of the Chancellery.) The proposal recommended an immediate dispatch of a centrally-appointed official with a team of six assistants to about ten well-selected areas.

Sŭng-no introduced this proposal with a quotation from the Analects which says that a ruler in governing his kingdom deems not to call at every house daily but dispatches his magistrate (Shou-ling in Chinese) to look after the interests of the people. Although the founder of the dynasty

wished to establish the local government, according to Sūng-no, the unsettled conditions of the infant dynasty prevented him from realizing this. As a result, the local strongmen, presently taking advantage of their power, were exploiting the people through undue excessive taxes and labors while the government were sitting powerless to do anything about this. Sūng-no failed to detail the specific functions and authority to be delegated to the proposed local government. But, considering the source of his knowledge on the local government system, we may safely assume that the proposed central appointee to the local government would have a considerable authority in his hands over the management of local affairs.

Another point Sūng-no touched upon in his memorial (though unfortunately it fails to be sufficiently specific to our satisfaction) was his concept of the power relationship between the monarch and the officials. He opened the topic by quoting passages from two Confucian classics, the Book of Change and the Analects. He quoted first the following passage from the Book of Change: "The sage influences the people's minds so as to have peace in the world"; and then one from the Analects: "The one who ruled by inaction was Shun. What indeed did he do? He merely placed himself majestically at his royal seat facing south; that was all."¹⁶ These two passages are usually considered as

¹⁶KRS 93:16b.

illustrations of the classic image of an ideal Confucian sage-ruler who governed his kingdom by merely being a man of high virtue. Through his high moral quality, the sage-ruler was thought to influence his subjects to do the proper thing. In this case, the actual conduct of his government was left to the officials whom he selected solely on the basis of the worthy qualities they possessed.

The government authority being thus delegated to the officialdom, the ruler took no direct part in the actual conduct of his government, but exerted a good influence over his officials through the persuasive power of his high moral qualities. Obviously, this was Sŭng-no's concept of an ideal Koryŏ king. He advised King Ch'i, indeed, to do just that. "If your majesty," he wrote in his memorial, "hold your mind in unassuming modesty but in veneration and treat your subjects with courtesy, then who would not exalt the vigor of his mind to inform your majesty of the evil plot when he appears in court and to think of the loyal assistance when he retreats from the court? This is what is meant when they say: 'a ruler uses his subjects with appropriate courtesy while the subjects serve their ruler with loyalty.'"¹⁷ He continued to say that the king should put himself above all selfish motives and harmful prejudices in guiding the officials in the conduct of the government. He advised the king not to be arrogant and punish all criminals in accord-

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

ance with the law.

It is evident from what he wrote in his memorial that Sŭng-no accepted the Confucian doctrine that the ultimate authority of government should lie in the king, but that in spite of his authority the king should act merely as a fair and just umpire by handing down a minimum number of judgments to the officials conducting the government. It is also clear that he believed it to be the responsibility of the officials to run the government but only under the correct moral guidance of a virtuous king. In this way, the power of the officials like himself would be hardly weak or meager. On the contrary, it would certainly exalt the importance of the officialdom as the essential instrument of the government. Under such circumstances, the king would have little choice but to promote and protect the officials' interests as the essential part of the government interest even if this was done at the expense of other interests. It is not strange, therefore, that in the Koryŏ government, which was designed by men of Sŭng-no's convictions, the monarchical power was so weak that the crown often fell as the victim of powerful officials, and that the officials could entrench themselves in the position of power and perpetuate among themselves for generations.

CHAPTER VI

THE REORGANIZATION OF KORYŎ GOVERNMENT

The Reorganization of Local Government

Upon ascending the throne, King Ch'i launched a program to reorganize the central and local governments, the armed forces, and the land system. At the same time, he carried out a rigorous campaign of ideological reorientation among the officials and the populace in the country. The main theme consistent throughout the entire reorganization effort was the centralization of government authority. To accomplish this, a network of transportation and communication facilities was constructed throughout the country which was placed under the control of the central government. The central government also took over the appointive, budgetary, and military powers from the local authorities. Most of these measures were adopted from the Chinese system, though the reorganization measures themselves were designed purposely to meet conditions peculiar to Koryŏ as she entered the final period of her consolidation of power.

The first act of centralization under King Ch'i was to control the provincial administration. In 983 the king dispatched twelve governors (Moksa) to set up the provincial government in key areas.¹ The establishment of the centrally

¹The twelve areas selected were: Kwangju, Yangju, Ch'ungju, Ch'ŏngju, Kongju, Chinju, Sangju, Chŏnju, Naju, Sŏngju, Hwang-

appointed governorship, first suggested by Ch'oe Sŭng-no in his memorial to King Ch'i, followed right after Sŭng-no's appointment to the influential post of Executive of Chancellery in 983. This leaves little doubt as to who was the real author of the act.

The initial task waiting for the new governors in the provinces must have been an extremely difficult one even though they were not the first envoys ever sent out to the provinces by the central government. Before them the central government was represented in the provinces, at least, by two different kinds of officials known as the Tax Custodians (Chojang) and the Provincial Commissioner (Oeŭpsa).² Although these liaison officials existed for decades until their abolishment in 983, we are left in the dark as to their actual functions in the provinces. The literal meaning of their titles, however, suggests that the Chojang might have been a central official sent to the provinces to take charge of the tax-in-kind collected, and that the Oeŭpsa might have been an officer sent to the local government on official business from the central government. In view of the fact that these two positions were abolished at the time of the dispatch of the first twelve governors, it would seem safe to surmise that among the new governors' duties was the collection of

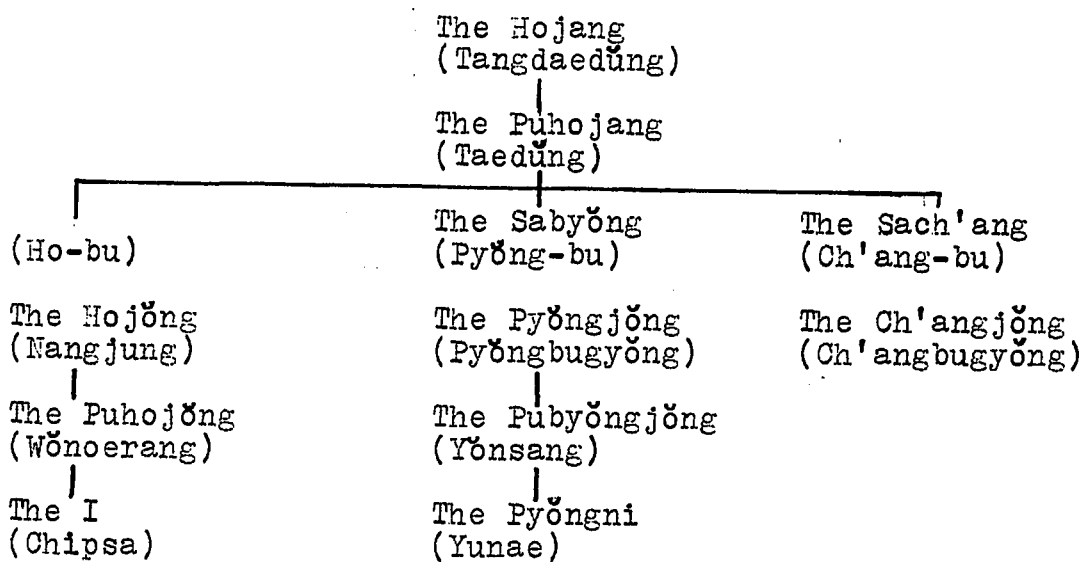
ju, and Haeju. It appears that each Moksa had a number of districts under his jurisdiction. At first the Moksa was sent to the post without his family, but in 986 he was permitted to take his family with him.

²KRS 77:33b

taxes from the local authorities and also the general supervision of the local government, both of which were left unattended by the abolition of the two old positions.

Apart from this, the change which might have taken place in the power of the once-autonomous local authorities is expressed in the revision of their titles which occurred in the same year as the establishment of the provincial government. The chart below shows the revised titles of the local officials along with the old ones (in parentheses) in the hierarchial order of their duties.³

THE REVISED LOCAL OFFICIALS' TITLES OF 983



The comparisons between the new and old titles make it quite clear that the revision was intended to remove the connotation of the old titles which had in effect symbolized the

³KRS 75:45ab.

autonomous power of the local authority. Even though the Koryŏsa is silent about the new chain of authority under the reorganized local government system, the revised local titles clearly suggest that the new arrangement greatly curtailed the original autonomous local power and put the local government under more direct control of the central government.

The weakening of the local power was undoubtedly a direct result of the establishment of the Mok, although the two measures are not related in the Koryŏsa. The fact that they took place in the same year tends to support this. Under the new local government system the central government now began to exercise greater control over the local authorities through the centrally appointed governor. This subordination of the local authorities under one centrally appointed official, in fact, marked the actual beginning of the end of the local autonomy which had been in force since the inception of the dynasty.

One also finds a few more pieces of evidence in the Koryŏsa which indicate the new subordination of local authorities to the central government. For example, central appropriations were introduced for the budget of the local government and for maintaining local transportation and communication facilities in 983 (for farm land) and 993 (for wooded land).⁴ There are two more fragmentary indications of the

⁴These sajŏn appropriations were made in four categories: the Kongsu-jŏn and kongsu-siji to cover the general expenses of the local organs, possibly including the salaries of the local officials; the chi-jŏn to cover the expense for office supplies; and the chang-jŏn to cover the expenses for maintaining horses, carts, mail delivery, etc. KRS 78:17a-18a. For the meaning of the sajŏn, see p. 203 ff of this dissertation.

imposition of the central control over local authorities. One of these is the act of 987 by which the central government apparently destroyed the arms of the local strongmen at the district (Chu and Kun) level. The weapons were confiscated and then were forged into agricultural implements. The other is the act of 996 by which the central government imposed its control over the Sasingwan by fixing the number of Sasingwan in each region (Chu). The significance of these two decrees is obvious when we recall that the Sasingwan were once powerful meritorious subjects who possessed their own private army, and exercised the supervisory authority over the autonomous local officials in their area. Sixty years after the establishment of the Sasingwan, the central government managed to exert a firm control over them. By 1018 the central government became so strong that it could impose a restriction on the number of local officials in each district on the basis of the population. Finally, in 1051 the central government introduced a uniform ladder for the local officials' advancement, thus manifesting its complete control over the local authorities.⁵

With these sweeping local government changes, the central government assumed more direct administrative responsibility over the local areas by taking away the autonomous power from the hands of the local strongmen. The local authority thus obtained was, in turn, vested in the hands of the rapidly

⁵KRS 75:45b-47a.

expanding central officials who were to become the new Koryŏ ruling class. The formation of the yangban, therefore, went side by side with the sweeping reorganization of the local government system. This is a significant point for understanding the political relationship between the yangban and the powerful local families. It should be recalled that among those who were recruited into the newly emerging central officialdom were the members of the powerful local families. And their recruitment undoubtedly facilitated a smooth transition of power from the local authorities to the central government. Evidently this accounts for the curious absence of any noticeable resistance by local strongmen before their acceptance of the central control. Such resistance apparently became senseless when the cooperation with the central authority promised them a new possibility of power through their admission into the central officialdom. Moreover, once they got into the central officialdom, there was always a possibility of their domination of the central government itself.

It should be pointed out that all of this seemingly peaceful transference of local power to the central government took place when Koryŏ was building up her defense forces under the increasing possibility of an invasion by the Kitans in the North. The impending military threat from the Kitans apparently compelled the Koryŏ government to mobilize all national resources for the defense of the kingdom and it facilitated in inducing the local authorities to surrender their power to the central government. The threat of foreign invasion was there-

fore another reason for the absence of resistance by the local strongmen against the central encroachment.

The Military Reorganization

The imperative need for national defense under the threat of an imminent foreign invasion also compelled the government to pay much attention to the reorganization of the nation's military forces. The reorganization of the Koryŏ army, then, was of primary concern to the new architects of the Koryŏ government. Although the Koryŏsa is scanty in its description of the military reorganization of this period, the available data in it leads us to the conclusion that the military reorganization was also carried out as a part of the centralization of government authority. In 984, for example, the colors of the military uniform were fixed for the first time. The Koryŏsa fails to say specifically that this was a part of the over-all Koryŏ military reorganization, but it is evident that fixing the colors of the uniform was apparently a calculated move toward standardizing the armed forces.

Further evidence of the reorganization of the military forces is found in the establishment of the two Northern Frontier Defense Commissions in 989 and in the establishment of the Supreme Security Council in 991. There is little doubt that these steps were taken in connection with an over-all reorganization of the central army, which was to emerge as the so-called two Kun and six Wi during the following decade. Out of these forces emerged the officer corps desig-

nated as the muban of the yangban. An inquiry into the structure of the fully developed central army will provide us a view of the hierarchial and numerical composition of the military officials.

The so-called two Kun and six Wi were composed of eight separate units of widely varying strength.

Two Kun

The Royal Regiments	1. Ŭngyang-gun	1,000 men
	2. Yongho-gun	2,000 men

Six Wi⁶

The Standing Armies	1. Chwau-wi	13,000 men
	2. Sinho-wi	7,000 men
	3. Hŭng'wi-wi	12,000 men

The Auxiliary Forces	4. Kŭmo-wi	7,000 men
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The Special Regiments	5. Ch'ŏnu-wi	2,000 men
	6. Kammun-wi	1,000 men

Each of these units had a commander and a deputy commander, whose respective military ranks were Superior General (Sangjanggun) and Grand General (Taejanggun), the two highest military ranks. The commanding officers of all eight units had the same rank and so did the deputy commanders, regardless of the size and function of their units which varied considerably

⁶The regiments (yŏng) of all six Wis except the Kammun-wi were classified into the posŭng (22 yŏngs), the chŏngyong (16 yŏngs), and the yŏk, sang, and hae yŏng (1 yŏng of each). The basis of their classifications, however, is unknown except in the case of obvious ones such as the hae yŏng, navy.

from one another. This peculiar situation resulted into an arrangement that permitted each unit to maintain a separate and independent command of its own, responsible only to the highest civil authority of the government. This arrangement also prevented the command of the entire central army from falling into the hands of a single military officer and it also balanced the power within the central army.

Precautions were taken to bar the military officials from holding important positions of responsibility in the government so as to avoid the concentration of power in the military hands. Compared with the civil officials, the highest rank attainable by the military officials was the upper third grade (chǒng sam p'um), which was four grades lower than the highest rank attainable by the civil officials, the upper first grade (chǒng il p'um) in the new eighteen grade official hierarchy. (See p.186 .) As a rare exception, when a military official had to be promoted beyond the ceiling rank of the upper third grade, he was first transferred to the civil service branch (munban) and then was given a higher rank for lack of a military position beyond this ceiling grade. Often such a transfer, before it was realized, met a strong and effective resistance from the aristocratic civil officials, in whose hands the appointive authority in the government resided. In this way, the military officials were even barred from participating in the deliberations of important military decisions in the government. On the other hand, the civil officials were permitted without restriction to fill

important military positions, thus monopolizing all important decision-making functions of the government in both civil and military affairs.⁷

Among the eight units, the two Kuns as the Royal Regiments were placed above the six Wi in importance because of the nature of the duty assigned to the former. As the Royal Regiments, they constituted probably the best and sharpest army in Koryŏ. In addition to this, they also enjoyed special prestige among the military units as the guard regiment of the crown. Of the two Kuns, however, the Ŭngyang-gun seems to have played a more important role than the Yongho-gun did, for the commander of the former unit was officially designated as the highest officer of the all armed forces (the Panju). As part of his function, he apparently represented his service branch and was responsible for the general management of the military establishment. But the exact nature of his responsibility is unfortunately unknown to us.

An interesting point in this connection is the existence of a consultative organ called the Chungbang which was comprised of the commanders and deputy commanders of all eight units. Even though its function is unknown, the Chungbang, as the assembly of the highest ranking military officials in Koryŏ, should have been a potential power house. It is

⁷Pyŏn T'ae-sŏp, "Koryŏ-jo ŭi Munban kwa Muban," Sahak-yŏnggu, XI (July, 1961), 1-82. For a documented study on the development of the Koryŏ central army, see: Yi Ki-baek, "Koryŏ Kyŏnggun Ko," Yi Pyŏng-do Paksa Hwagap-kinyŏm Nonch'ong, (Seoul, 1956), pp. 94-134; and _____, "Koryŏ Kunin Ko," Chindan-hakpo, Vol. XXI (Oct., 1960), pp. 5-40.

possible that one of the duties of the Panju was to preside in the Chungbang meeting and to serve as its chief spokesman. It is also possible that as the chief military official the Panju might have been charged with the responsibility of checking the power latent in the Chungbang rather than fostering that power. His close link with the civil authority, in any respect, casts some doubt on his role as the true spokesman of the genuine military interest. In view of the tight control that the civil authority exercised over the military officers in Koryŏ, nobody but a faithful supporter of the civil supremacy would have been permitted to assume the responsibility of the Panju. Indeed, the military revolt of 1014 was organized and led by top military officers as a protest against a civilian encroachment on their financial security. (See p.210ff.) And, moreover, after the military coup d'etat of 1170, when a military strongman emerged as the defacto ruler of the country, the Chungbang became the chief government organ in Koryŏ.

At the same time, the Koryŏ military unit seems to have maintained a certain amount of independent authority at each level of military command. This is evident in the existence of a consultative body, the pang, on all levels of command in the military organization. On the yŏng level, which was the largest denomination of elementary organic units of troops, the commanders of the yŏngs formed their bang, the Changgunbang (the Assembly of the Generals), while the lower officers formed their own assemblies, probably at every two

ranks.⁸ There is some indication that the assembly at each level was bound by no decisions of a higher level assembly.⁹ And the possibility of this becomes even more feasible when we consider the different duties assigned to all eight units of the central army and the different locations at which they were stationed. The two royal regiment units must have been stationed in the capital and its vicinity because of their duty to guard the palace and the royal family. The three standing army units, which were the principal combat troops of Koryŏ, must have been stationed in the northern frontier areas lining the traditional invasion route from the North. The auxiliary forces, whose principal function apparently was the police duty, must have been scattered around the country in small units as the major police force of the central government. Of the two special regiment units, the Ch'ŏnu-wi functioned as honor guards of all sorts and the Kammun-wi were gate guards, whose duties must have required them to be stationed primarily in the capital and other political centers. Under these circumstances, the assemblies of the generals and lower officers must have been formed according to their military duties and their specific locations. As a result, it must have been difficult to set up a unitary channel of authority or a single forum among them.

The highly diffused nature of the military authority in

⁸For the ranks and number of officers in one yŏng, a regiment of one thousand men, see p. 187 of this dissertation.

⁹KRS 101:4ab.

the armed forces, as it will be shown later, was in congruity with the principle of the civil supremacy over the military affairs under the reorganized government system. The mechanism of the civil supremacy was effected in the civil administration of the military affairs and in the supervision of logistic requirements. The Ministry of Military Affairs (Sangsŏ-byŏngbu) which handled such administrative matters, was a civil agency under civilian control. As one of the six Ministries (yuk pu), it was placed under the Department of Ministries (Sangsŏ-dosŏng) and through the interlocking system of checks and balances it was controlled by the Secretariat-Chancellery (Chungsŏ-munha-sŏng). (See p.228-234 .) The extensive civil control of the military forces soon resulted in an enormous inequity in the treatment of the two services in Koryŏ. The complete exclusion of the military officials from the positions of power in the government left the government solely in the hands of civil officials until the situation was reversed by the military coup d'etat of 1170.

The Two Services, Yangban

The over-all reorganization of the Koryŏ government also set up the framework under which the yangban emerged in Korea. The first concrete manifestation of the formalization of the yangban system appears in the establishment of a unitary system of hierarchy for the main body of the central officials. Although our sources are silent on the date of

its establishment, it seems obvious that a new hierarchy of eighteen grades was established in connection with the overall reorganization of the central government under King Ch'i. Because the new rank system classified the main body of central officials into eighteen grades on the basis of their positions in the reorganized government system in Koryŏ.

The new eighteen grade hierarchy was described by numerals one to nine with each number being subdivided into the upper (chŏng) or lower (chong) grades, and all major positions in the central government as well as the central army in Koryŏ were given a rank. An exhibition of a few samples of these positions and their corresponding ranks would show how the new eighteen grade ranks were designated to the official positions.¹⁰ For instance, the wives (including concubines) of the king, the three Preceptors (samsa) and three Dukes (samkong) received the highest rank classification of the upper first grade. They were followed by the heads of the three Departments (sam sŏng), and the Superintendents (P'ansa) of the six Ministries, of the Finance Commission (Samsa), and of the Hanlin Academy (Hallim-wŏn), all of whom received the rank classification of the lower first grades. In the category of the upper third grade were the Senior and Junior Policy Advisors (Chwa-, U -sangsi) of the Secretariat-Chancellery, the Ministers (Sangsŏ) of the

¹⁰The examples are taken from the government system as it existed during the reign of King Hwi (Mun-jong: 1046-1082). It is generally believed that the government reorganization undertaken during King Ch'i's reign came to its completion during King Hwi's reign.

six Ministries, the Commissioners of the Finance Commission (Samsa-sa), the Superintendent and the Chief Censor (Ŏsa-daebu) of the Censorate, the Head Academician (Haksa-sŭngji) of the Hanlin Academy, and so on. The civil officials from the fourth to the sixth grade bracket occupied the remaining important positions of power and responsibility in the central government. Included in this group were the officials of the policy criticism (nangsa) and the censors, all the Executives (Sirang), Office Chiefs (Nangjung) and Assistant Office Chiefs (Wŏnoerang) of the six Ministries, and the Directors (Kam and Kyŏng), Deputy Directors (Sogam and Sogyŏng) and Executive Assistants (Sŭng) of some of the important subministry offices plus many others, on whom the major burden of responsibility to the central government fell.¹¹ Needless to say, the highly important nature of some of these duties must have made the ranks above the lower sixth grade eminently respectable and certainly difficult to obtain for anyone but officials of good family backgrounds with promising talents. The importance of these ranks is shown in contrast by the relatively low prestige which the ranks below the upper seventh grade seem to have carried with them. This is evident not only in the fact that the latter group was the lower bracket grade for the civil officials, but more importantly in the fact that they were given to the officials of the namban as well as to the non-aristocratic descendants.¹²

¹¹For the functions of these officials and others cited in the following sentences, see pp. 224-235 of this dissertation.

¹²The nature of the namban is discussed on p. 189 f. For

The military positions were also given new ranks in the eighteen grade hierarchy. The Superior General and the Grand General, the commander and the deputy commander of the eight units of the central army, received a rank classification of the upper and lower third grade respectively. This, of course, meant that the highest ranking military officer was three to four grades lower than the highest ranking civil official. The rank of the Superior General, the upper third grade, was given in the civil service to the Policy Advisors, the Finance Commissioners, the Ministers, and the Chief Censor, as we have noted above. Moreover, in comparison with the civil officials, the military officials received less compensation than their actual rank in the official hierarchy warranted. In the new official stipend scale of 998, for example, the Superior General had the fifth highest stipend, eighty kyŏl of farm land and fifty kyŏl of wooded land, while his civilian counterparts with the same rank received the fourth highest stipend, eighty-five kyŏl of farm land and fifty-five kyŏl of wooded land. In the case of a titular position, the difference became even greater. Thus the titular Ministers of the

a brief study of the namban, see: Cho Chwa-ho, "Yŏ-dae Namban Ko," Tongguk-sahak, Vol. V (Dec., 1957), pp. 1-17. Among the officials of non-aristocratic descendants were the offspring of the underlings known as the chamnoin. In rare and exceptional cases, the offspring of these underlings were permitted to enter the regular civil service, but their descendants were prevented by a government regulation from following their ancestors' civil official career. In their social status the underlings ranked below the lowest stratum of the yangban even though sometimes they were allowed to enter the military service. But they were above the commoner by virtue of their technical knowledge and their official standing. KRS 75:22a-23b.

six Ministries (san yuk Sangsŏ) received the sixth stipend in the scale, two grades lower than that of the holders of the active positions, while the titular Superior General received the eighth, three grades lower than that of his counterpart in the active list. What this means in terms of prestige and influence is that the military rank was in actual value less than the civil rank even though the two ranks were theoretically based on the same eighteen grade hierarchy and had nominally the same value.¹³

The ranks of the eighteen grade hierarchy were also given to the rest of the officers of the central army. The following is a list of the ranks given to the officers. The number of the officers of each rank in a regiment (yŏng) is given in parenthesis.¹⁴

Changgun	Upper 4th grade	(1)
Chungnangjang	Upper 5th grade	(2)
Nangjang	Upper 6th grade	(5)
Pyŏl'chang	Upper 7th grade	(5)
Sanwŏn	Upper 8th grade	(5)
Wi	Upper 9th grade	(20)
Taejŏng	Lower 9th grade	(40)

¹³The inequity between the civil and military stipends was corrected in the new stipend scale of 1076. Moreover, the new scale in some cases gave a higher stipend to the military official than it did to his civil counterpart. See p. 217 of this dissertation or KRS 78:10b-13a; 80:2a-4b.

¹⁴The number of the officers at each rank listed on this page applied to all regiments except that of the Ungyang-gun, which had two Nangjang, Pyŏl'chang, and Sanwŏn of each, instead of the regular number of five each for them.

Besides these regular combat officers, each unit in the six Wi had one Changni of the lower sixth grade and two Noksa of the upper eighth grade, who functioned as the administrative officers for their unit. It appears that these officers were basically civil officials attached to the military units to take charge of their administrative work, though they might have been more than mere administrators in the units as far as their civilian superiors in the central government were concerned.¹⁵

The degradation of the military officials to a position inferior to the civil officials in this period marks a striking contrast to the old position of power and influence that the military leaders had enjoyed before the purge of 960. The continuous deterioration of their position in the government since the purge is a clear demonstration of the failure of the once powerful families to make a complete recovery from the blow of the purge. It is also an indication that the redemptive measures instituted by King Yu fell short of restoring their old position in the government. In fact, the inferior position which they had come to assume under King Ch'i's reorganization of the government was a result of the implementation of the policy of civil supremacy initiated by King So. It is clear, then, that the trend to reverse the relative power positions of the civil and military officials in the government had obviously continued even after King So's

¹⁵For example, see: KRS 97:10a; 95:11b.

death, and that by the time of King Ch'i the relative power positions of the two services were completely reversed in Koryŏ.

Needless to say, the group that benefitted most from the policy of civil supremacy were the Confucian oriented scholar-officials. Since their interests fell in line with the policy, they not only gave their support, but also became the actual designers of the government reorganization under King Ch'i. We have already seen Ch'oe Sŭng-no and the men of his caliber working for the government reorganization. Consequently, under the reorganized government they were the ones to emerge as the dominant group in the new officialdom of the Koryŏ.

In addition to the civil and military services, there was a third service called namban. Compared with the other two services, the namban was distinctively inferior in prestige and power as well as in number. Although the functions performed by the namban are far from clear, what little is known to us indicates that they were mainly centered around the personal service of the king. But the relatively small number of thirty-odd positions in the service, many restrictions imposed upon the career opportunities of the namban officials, and the relatively inferior social origin of the officials in this service clearly indicate the insignificant role they played in the government. The highest grade ever allowed for the officials of this service was the fourth grade and even this was but for a brief period.¹⁶ For the most part, the

¹⁶Yi Pyŏng-do, Hanguksa--Chungse-p'yŏn, (Seoul: Chindan-hakhoe, 1961, pp. 140-142.

upper limit for the namban officials was set at the seventh grade. Under the circumstances, the namban should be placed somewhere between the yangban and the low born underlings in the hierarchy of the Koryŏ public servants. Indeed, the namban seems to have often served as an outlet for promising underlings whose unusual talents were thought to be better used than kept in the lowest capacities of mere functionaries carved out for average underlings as their hereditary profession. Because of certain similarities in the functions of the namban and the chabŏp of earlier times, one is strongly tempted to link the namban with the chabŏp of the pre-reorganization period. However, in the face of no definite evidence to prove such a link at this time, we shall leave this perplexing problem of the third service and proceed to discussing another significant step in the development of the official hierarchy in the Koryŏ yangban system.

The tremendous growth of the civil officialdom as a result of the reorganization of the government under King Ch'i necessitated the introduction of the T'ang rank classification titles of 995. The T'ang system of twenty-nine cheng-chieh was to supplement the eighteen grade rank system which by then had become deficient in accommodating the rapidly expanding civil officials in Koryŏ. It is significant that the new twenty-nine rank titles were applied to the civil officials, but not to the military officials of the Koryŏ central officialdom. Instead, the T'ang twenty-nine military rank titles were issued to the local officials who officered the local

militia that had been mobilized against the possible Kitan invasion, and also to certain craftsmen who made notable contributions to the dynasty.¹⁷ The reason for the omission of the military officials from the application of the new twenty-nine rank title was found in the fact that the Koryŏ central army officer corp had not developed its rank differentiation sufficiently to be applicable to the new twenty-nine rank classification system. In fact, the officers were differentiated into only ten regular ranks including the rank of the army unit's civil administrators. Consequently, the old eighteen grade rank system was still adequate to cover the military officials of all ranks in the Koryŏ central army. In contrast to this, Koryŏ needed at the time a new set of rank titles for the local officialdom in order to differentiate it from the central officialdom. The need to differentiate the local authority from the central authority has been already noted in the change of the local official titles of 983. This time the need extended to the rank classification.

The significance of the new twenty-nine rank titles is also found in the inclusion of the civil officials into a single system of hierarchy so as to streamline the chain of authority in the central officialdom. It is important to point out, however, that the new rank titles did not replace the old eighteen grade rank system. The old system was retained even after the introduction of the new rank titles and

¹⁷Suematsu, "Kōrai-shoki no..." pp. 161-164; and Hatada Hakashi, "Kōrai no Busankai," Chōsen-gakuhō, Combined issue of Vols. XXI and XXII (Oct., 1961), pp. 451-482.

it continued to function as the basis of the rank classification for all the major positions in the government. The advantage of the concurrent use of the two systems was that the old eighteen grade ranks were still applied only to the officials holding positions of active duty in the government while the new twenty-nine rank titles were issued to both active and inactive members of the yangban. The T'ang system of twenty-nine rank titles, therefore, was used merely to supplement the numerical deficiency of the old eighteen grade rank system in Koryŏ. But it also provided a framework for extending the hierarchy of the central officialdom, and thus accelerated the trend toward a centralized authority in government. At any rate, with the introduction of the T'ang rank titles, Koryŏ completed its development of hierarchical framework for the yangban system.

The Ideology and Its Custodians

Another important achievement of the architects of the early Koryŏ government was the spread of the Confucian ideology in the new dynasty. The formal acceptance of Confucian ideology by the new dynasty actually goes back as far as the time of the inception of the dynasty, but the actual implementation of this ideology was a slow process as is illustrated in the introduction of the civil service examination and the formal adoption of the Chinese form of government in Koryŏ. During the reign of King Ch'i, however, a number of positive measures were instituted to promote the

intensive study of Confucianism among the ruling class and to spread the basic Confucian doctrines among the people. In 957 the government dispatched one accomplished Confucian scholar to each of the twelve Mok, the new provincial government sites. The duties of these scholars were to encourage the Confucian studies among the local officials, also to provide lessons and guidance for the aristocratic children, and finally to select qualified students to send to the capital to participate in the state civil service examination. The rule was that if any of these scholars should fail to send at least one candidate for the civil service examination in the capital during his tenure, he would be forced to stay at his post until he could do so. His record in sending the successful candidates also became the basis of his future promotion.¹⁸

The government also founded a state university called Kukchagam in the capital in 992 and made it the center of higher education. The government encouraged the establishment of schools of Confucian studies in the provinces by making provisions for their maintenance available. The students in the Kukchagam were largely children of high-ranking officials. At times, however, exceptionally good students from the provincial schools were also brought there for more advanced studies. Among Kukchagam students, the talented were picked out and sent to China for further studies. Some

¹⁸KRS 74:26a.

of these students came back with Sung chin-shih degrees as well as Sung official ranks from China.

The officials were urged to improve their Chinese. With only a few exceptions, all civil officials under fifty se were required, for example, to submit three pieces of shih and one piece of fu a month if they were central officials, and ten pieces of shih and one piece of fu a year if they were provincial officials. Exceptions were made for those key officials who had been engaged in drafting the royal edict during their official career. This practice, known as the civil official monthly assignment system (munsin-wŏlgwaje), became a kind of compulsory literary training program for the officials and it was kept throughout the Koryŏ period. Furthermore, the propagation of the Confucian ethical and moral standards among the populace was vigorously pushed. The government periodically picked out those who lived up to the highest standards of Confucian moral codes and it cited them for their exemplary conduct before the royal presence. These citations were undoubtedly intended to encourage the people to conform to the Confucian codes of behavior.

The constant propagation of Confucianism in Koryŏ in time became a vigorous attempt to mould the whole Korean society into a Confucian oriented state. To a large extent the effort was successful. Korea after this period was not able to look back to old Silla for a cultural inspiration. Instead, she kept on absorbing the alien Chinese culture in order to meet her cultural needs. In this absorption, the Koreans were much

more successful than any other people who had made a similar attempt. The accomplishment in the early Koryŏ period alone testifies to the spectacular success the Koreans made in this respect. Already by the eleventh century, we find the Chinese publishing with acclaim the works of two Korean envoys to the Sung court, when their literary skill accidentally came to the Chinese attention.¹⁹ Moreover, a Sung emperor could request of the Koryŏ court the importation of over one-hundred and twenty rare Chinese works.²⁰ These incidents reveal the surprisingly high quality of Chinese studies in Korea in the eleventh century.

It goes without saying that behind this remarkable achievement were the long painstaking years of hard work by many Korean scholars who laid down the foundations on which to build up such flourishing literary activities. And at the same time, no less responsible for producing such literary achievements was the successful transformation of the early Koryŏ ruling class into a civil-minded scholarly class. We must search for the main cause of this transformation in the establishment of the principle of civil supremacy in the early Koryŏ government.

The government in the hands of those who were trained in the Confucian statecraft rather than in military skills became a powerful stimulus for the career-conscious ruling class to receive Confucian training. This, it should be recalled,

¹⁹KRS 95:18b.

²⁰KRS 10:23a-25b.

is in sharp contrast to the characteristic outlook of the Silla ruling class which was more dominantly martial than civil. The transformation is an epochal change in the development of the Korean ruling class. And we should attribute this change largely to the influence of Chinese political thought. However, this transformation did not succeed in uprooting all the indigenous characteristics which the Koryŏ ruling class inherited from Silla. Although the basic outlook of the Koryŏ ruling class remained more civil than military for the rest of her history, the transformation did not bring any noticeable change in the social composition of the Korean ruling class. The monopoly of the government by the great aristocratic families remained unchanged. Through the institutionalized forms of scrutiny, all potential candidates for the government service were meticulously screened on the basis of their social backgrounds.

The access to Confucian education provided the first process to screen the candidates for the government service. The admission qualifications to the state supported Confucian university will illustrate a form of social restriction imposed on the candidates for government service. The three colleges of the university which gave regular Confucian training to the maximum of nine hundred students accepted their students on the basis of family backgrounds.²¹ Although all of them taught the same subjects, the Kukcha-hak, with a maximum

²¹ Yi Pyŏng-do, Hanguksa--Chungse-p'yŏn, pp. 239-241.

capacity of three hundred students, accepted only the sons and grandsons of officials of the lower third grade or higher in the eighteen grade official hierarchy. Since the children of the military officials, as a rule, were excluded from receiving higher education, this admission policy was apparently designed to make the Kukcha-hak into the training institution for the descendants of the great aristocratic families and for the future leaders of the aristocratic ruling group. The next college, called the Taehak, selected its three hundred students only from the sons and grandsons of officials of the lower fifth grade and higher or from the great grandsons of officials in the lower third grade or higher. The last Samun-hak admitted only the sons of officials in the lower seventh grade or higher. The significance of the word "higher" is that it allowed even the children of "higher" ranking officials, let us say, of the lower second grade, to be sent to one of the latter two schools should the official's social (family) status happen to be lower than the prescribed social status of the officials of the same rank. In other words, although the officials' rank usually corresponded to their social status, in some cases it did not and if someone happened to hold a grade higher than his social status warranted, his children were not permitted to receive the benefits of his artificially higher rank because of this provision. Therefore, none but the civil officials with proper social background could send their children to these schools. Here we find a strict social basis for the Koryŏ official hier-

archy. Likewise, the schools of special technical skills such as law, mathematics, and calligraphy, accepted the sons of officials of the lower eighth grade or higher and also some commoners; and these schools do not appear to have had a fixed number for student admission. The admission qualifications imposed on students of the private schools are unknown, but they could not have been very different from those of the state supported university.

The second process of scrutiny for the government service was the civil service examination. Held once in every three years under normal conditions, this examination served two basic purposes: the ideological check and the official recruitment. Its function as the ideological check was in part automatically implemented through the study of Confucian doctrines by all aspirants of the civil service in preparation for the examination. It was also implemented by the government's careful control of the examination. The government could influence the kind of questions asked in the examination or it could set the correct answers for the questions since all the questions as well as the answers had to be officially verified by the king. Used this way, the civil service examination became a powerful weapon to mould the minds of future officials in conformity with the official ideology.

Some four hundred candidates, chosen every third year for the capital examination, provided the government with a rich recruitment ground for the selection of its officials. The competition usually ran ten to one for all degrees granted

in the capital examination.²² This one-to-ten ratio, of course, excludes the other candidates who failed the preliminary examinations at the capital and provinces. The inclusion of the candidates of the preliminary examinations would make the ratio much higher although the actual figures at this level are unavailable.

At the final capital examination, the candidates were carefully scrutinized according to their social backgrounds as well as their performance on the examination. For the examination of their social backgrounds, the candidates were required to submit the geneology of their family to the government long before the examination date in order to get the official clearance of their eligibility. In addition to this, the candidates were required to identify themselves on the examination and to write down the names of their four immediate ancestors as well as their sib-origin (pongwan). Although this information on the candidates' identity was sealed off before the grading took place, it was required on the examination papers for official scrutiny in the selection of candidates for the government service. Frequent flare-ups involving dishonesty and favoritism in the grading of the examinations support the assertion that in spite of the preventative measures, the information on the candidates' identity actually influenced the examiners in their supposedly unbiased judgment of the candidates' answers. The pressure to utilize this information

²²Ibid., pp. 244-245.

by the examiners was ever present because of the prestige which the civil examination degrees carried with them in the official circle, in addition to the generous official stipend of 20 kyŏl for the candidates of the highest marks and 17 kyŏl for other successful candidates. In exceptional cases, such as the four brothers of Kim Pu-sik who all passed the examination, the official reward was extended even to the parents of the candidates. Another source of such pressure came from the fact that the successful candidates usually entered into a teacher-student relationship with the examiner under whom they passed the examination and this relationship often contributed significantly to their political careers through the establishment of a stronger political tie between them. In reality, therefore, the civil service examination served the interest of the great aristocratic families in monopolizing and perpetuating the government power among themselves. This is best manifested in the restrictions on the eligibility for the civil examination which limited the right to take the examination to the descendants of aristocratic families that were registered in the official yangban registers.²³

Other than the legal restrictions, there were also economic factors which tended to favor the wealthy aristocratic families for successful official careers. Their wealth helped them to provide their children with the choice educa-

²³KRS 73:3b f; 95:2ab.

tion to prepare them for government service. The Confucian education required for the Koryŏ official was a long, costly process to complete. The four required courses in the Confucian school took eight and one-half years for the full-time student to complete. The expense involved in this eight and one-half year education is not known. But a school with the enrollment of two hundred students needed an appropriation from the government so high that it caused concern in the official circle, and the censorate found it necessary to ask for the reduction of the student enrollment to lessen the financial burden of the government.²⁴ We can surmise from this example that expenses involved in receiving the formal Confucian education were a considerable burden even to the officials of more-than-average economic means. There seems little doubt, at any rate, that the affluent great aristocratic families had a clear-cut edge over the less fortunate non-aristocratic families in furnishing the necessary education to their children. The rise of the aristocratic families in the Koryŏ government is significant, because it gave a forceful impetus to the revival of the old Silla oligarchical rule in Koryŏ.

²⁴KRS 74:29b-30a.

CHAPTER VII

THE POWER OF THE ARISTOCRATIC YANGBAN

The Land System and the Government Finance

The early Koryŏ land system was devised basically as a system of public finance. Among its major functions was providing official compensation to all public servants (potential, active or retired) for their services to the state. The basic unit of all public finance was rendered in terms of rent from the land and was administered through government agencies. It is significant that the economic base of the Koryŏ yangban was laid down through the establishment of this system. Consequently, a short introduction to the Koryŏ land system is appropriate for a better understanding of the economic basis of the yangban system.

Under the agrarian economy of Koryŏ the main source of wealth was land. This accordingly became the economic basis of the new dynasty. The early architects of the Koryŏ government took the basic form of their new land system from Chinese chün-t'ien system. Embodied in this land system were the principles that all land was the personal property of the king, and that the land should be "equally" distributed to the people in return for their service to the state.¹ Derived from these

¹See: Sohn Pow-key, The Theory and Practice of Land-system in Korea in Comparison with China (Unpublished M.A. thesis: University of California, Berkeley, 1956); and Wan Kuo-ting "The System of Equal Land Allotments in Medieval

principles was the system of dynastic land allocation as well as the system of taxation in the form of land-rent. These systems, it seems, found a ready home in Korea which previously had a considerable history of the communal land ownership.² It must have been an easy transfer from the system of communal ownership of land to the system of state ownership. And such a transition seems to have been made even easier because it took place at a time when Korea was feverishly absorbing the medieval Chinese culture with the zeal of a new convert. We shall see how the Koreans worked out the imported Chinese system to meet their needs.

The Koryŏ land system was geared, first of all, to finance government expenditure. The dynastic land allocation was to secure the income for all public personnel and public agencies so long as they functioned as official agents. The income came from the rent of the land, which was first collected from the peasants at a uniform rate set by the government and was then distributed to the appropriate agencies. Under the system all land in the country was classified into two categories, the sajŏn ("the private land") and the kongjŏn ("the public land"). It should be added that the terms designating the two categories of the land do not in any sense denote the nature of its ownership. On the contrary,

Times" Chinese Social History, translation of selected studies by E-tu Zen Sun and John de Francis (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Society, 1956), pp. 157-184.

²It is generally believed that land was a common tribal property in ancient Korea. Wada Ichiro, Chōsen no Tochi-seido oyobi Chisei-seido Chōsa-hokokusho, (Keijo: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1920), pp. 13, 15, 18 f.

all titles for the land as a general rule belonged to the state--more specifically, to the person of the king. These terms were used merely to indicate the nature of the appropriation for which the land in question was allocated. Although it is extremely difficult to draw a clear-cut line of demarcation between the two on the basis of their actual usage, generally the sajŏn was appropriated specifically for the expenditure of an individual unit--be it a person, government unit, or pure public institution--whereas the kongjŏn was not specifically appropriated, but was in the government possession for the use of unforeseen needs. Thus, the revenue from the kongjŏn was most often used to meet unexpected expenditures such as an enemy attack, natural calamities and special rewards, or else it was kept as a reserve fund for any supplementary or new sajŏn appropriations.

The sajŏn appropriations, on the other hand, were used for, (1) the regular income for all public servants, including the military personnel;³ (2) the expenditures of all government agencies, including the palaces of royal princes and princesses and public communication and transportation facilities;⁴ (3) the land endowment for the regular ex-

³This category included the yŏkpun-jŏn (or the oeyŏk-chŏn and the kwa-jŏn), the kun-jŏn, the hanin-jŏn, the kongŭm-jŏn or the yongŏp-chŏn, the kubun-jŏn, and probably the tun-jŏn. For the meanings of these terms and the ones cited in the following two footnotes, see: Wada, op. cit., pp. 27-38; and Kim Sang-gi, Koryŏsidaesa, pp. 304-312.

⁴In this second category was the konghae-jŏn which consists of the naejangt'aek-chŏn, the kungwŏn-jŏn, the kongsu-jŏnji, the chi-jŏn, and the chang-jŏn.

penses of the Buddhist temples and Confucian schools.⁵

In spite of the principle of the state's ownership of land, the sajõn rent in most cases was permanently appropriated to specific units in the form of land endowments simply because such establishments (and their expenditures) were permanent in nature. Thus all sajõn appropriations, except the yõkpun-jõn, the kun-jõn, the hanin-jõn, and the kubun-jõn (all of which were made to individual subjects) gave their recipients (mostly the government agencies, the public establishments, the royal branch families and the high ranking officials) a permanent claim for the rents from the land allocated to them. Even the rest of the sajõn appropriations which were to be withdrawn from persons terminating their service often had provisions which allowed the recipients to claim part or all of the rent from the appropriated land even after they had terminated their service. Furthermore, in some cases the recipients could transmit the rent claim to their descendants if the latter could take over their duties following retirement. For example, the yõkpun-jõn appropriation to individual government employees was reduced by half at the time of retirement and it was suspended entirely at death, whereas the kun-jõn of the soldiers could be transferred to their immediate kin when they became eligible for the same military duty.

It is true that these provisions were intended to safeguard the economic welfare of the recipients. But the permanent nature of the sajõn appropriations makes it clear also

⁵In this last category were the sawõn-jõn and hak-chõn.

that they were intended to maintain the fiscal stability of the government. Unlike the modern Western practice of determining a budget by its expenditure, Koryŏ determined its budget by the revenue. Since the major source of government revenue was the rent-in-kind from the land, all appropriations were computed in terms of the rent from the land. The amount of arable land being limited, the government had to fix permanently the amount of the annual appropriation.

Although the government supposedly was the sole agency to collect the rents from all the land and to distribute them to the appropriate recipients, frequent internal disorders and foreign invasions often prevented it from performing these essential duties, thus disrupting a smooth and uninterrupted operation of this vital function.⁶ Under such emergency conditions, the individual recipient had to step in to fill the government function. It appears that in the course of time all the sajŏn appropriations came to be regarded as de facto land allotments granted to certain individuals because they had to take over too frequently the function of collecting the rent from the land appropriated to them. Under these circumstances, it was inevitable for the sajŏn to become in time the major target of land grabbing by the powerful yangban. It constantly expanded in size at the expenses of the kongjŏn, and much of the sajŏn actually became

⁶During the decade of 1009-1019 alone Koryŏ suffered three major Kitan invasions, two major political upheavals (one of which resulted in a forced abdication of King Song (Mok-chong) and his subsequent murder), and a number of minor Jurchen attacks.

private land owned by the great aristocratic families. Although few sources are available, it is hoped that a discussion of the official income will throw some light on the gradual process through which the aristocratic families engrossed the sajŏn appropriations to aggrandize their economic power.

The Revisions of Official Stipend Scales

The first complete revision of the official stipend scale of 976 took place in 998. The revision was announced in a new official stipend scale called The Land-rent and Fuel-wood Scale of the Civil and Military Services and the Soldiers. In the new scale all stipends were grouped together under a single scale and then were divided into eighteen grades on the basis of their official positions. In addition to this, the revised scale contained many new features which made it quite different from the old scale. First of all, the new scale, in addition to the entire central officialdom, included the rank and file of the central army who were excluded from the old scale. Unlike the old scale of 976, the new one was neither classified by the colors of the official garb, nor was it arranged according to the three groups of the munban, muban and the chabŏp. The basis of classification in the new scale was the official's post and rank. The most noticeable feature was the disappearance of the chabŏp group which put all officials into either a civil or military group, thus indicating the completion of the two service system in Koryŏ.

In other words, by virtue of this new two-group classification system, the basis of the Koryŏ yangban system was formally completed in Korea.

The second important difference between the two scales was the relative (as well as absolute) rise in position and income of the civil officials over the military officials. In the old scale of 976, as we have already observed, the average stipend rate of military officials was relatively higher than that of civil officials. In the new official stipend scale of 998, however, the highest military rank, Superior General, received the fifth highest stipend and the four stipends above it were reserved for high civil positions. Moreover, the difference in the stipend rate between the functional position and the titular position for the same civil post and rank was usually one or two stipend grades, whereas for the military positions the difference between the two was three to four stipend grades. For example, the civil post of the Deputy Directorship for the sub-ministry offices and their titular position received the eighth and ninth grade stipends, respectively, and the heads of the six Ministries and their titular positions were given the fourth and sixth grade stipends. The Superior General and its titular rank were given the fifth and eighth grade stipends respectively and the Grand General and its titular rank were given the sixth and tenth grade stipends. The inferior stipend position of the military officials in comparison with the stipend position of the civil officials is consistent

with the principle of civil supremacy in the Koryŏ government, and it indicates a higher economic status for the civil officials than that of the military officials under the revised scale of 998.

The degradation of the military from a position of superiority to one of inferiority reflects the increasing power of the aristocratic civil officials in the government. As a product of these officials, the new scale of 998 and its subsequent revisions were the fruits of their efforts to better their own economic situation at the expense of less privileged social groups such as the military. This is evident, for example, from the general cut-down in the stipend rates of the new scale of 998 compared to the old rates in the scale of 976. The highest stipend in the new scale, 100 kyŏl of farm land and 70 kyŏl of wooded land showed a reduction of 10 kyŏl of farm land and 40 kyŏl of wooded land. By the same token, the lowest stipend in the new scale was 20 kyŏl of farm land and no wooded land at all, whereas its counterpart in the old scale was 21 kyŏl of farm land and 10 kyŏl of wooded land. One notices a sharper reduction in wooded land than in farm land in the new scale. The average rate of the old scale was 68.5 kyŏl of farm land and 67.5 kyŏl of wooded land as against the average of 58 kyŏl of farm land and 32 kyŏl of wooded land for the new scale. In part, this general reduction was probably due to the natural increase in the number of officials in the government since the promulgation of the old scale. But a more important reason could be the growing

conversion of the sajon appropriations into privately owned land by aristocratic families after the old scale of 976 was abandoned.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the new scale of 998 did not retain the provision of the old scale which made the individual official's personal quality (inp'um) the basis of his stipend rate. Instead, the new system assigned a stipend strictly on the basis of the recipient's official rank and position. This shift in qualifications suggests a revolutionary change in the position of civil officials relative to that of the military officials. Previously, as we have seen, the civil officials depended primarily on royal power for the protection of their political and economic interests. But by 998 it appears that they had already established their position and power in the government so firmly that their official income did not have to wait upon royal favor. On the contrary, their official position and rank automatically ensured them one of the fixed stipend rates in the new scale. The significance of this is that the Koryŏ civil officialdom moved away from a position of dependence on the king and by 998 became a self-sustaining interest group, whereas the military officials became more and more dependent upon the civil officials in order to wield their authority.

The military discontent over their rapidly deteriorating official position finally flared up in a sudden and short-lived military coup in 1014. This revolt was led by a group of disgruntled military officers who were incited by the

Supreme Security Council's (Chungch'u-wŏn) decision to take their yongop-chŏn in order to reassign it as the appropriation for civil officials' salaries. After the successful military coup, the rebellious officers brought about a reversal of the Council's decision and they forced the king to send into exile two high civil officials responsible for the Council's decision. Then they instituted the reorganization of two key organs in the central government, the Censorate and the Financial Commission. As a part of this reorganization, they also dictated an end to the exclusion of military officials from civil positions. Under the new edict, the military officials who had the regular court audience (their rank unknown) were made eligible for the civil positions. Through these measures, the rebellious military officials attempted to terminate the civil monopoly of the government power and the civil control of the military in Koryŏ. In this sense, the military coup was a significant manifestation of the general discontent of the military over the policy of the civil supremacy in Koryŏ. Through their direct action, the military made a belated attempt to arrest the civil encroachment on their interests. In order to win the popular support from the public servants, a general raise in the stipend rate was announced by the government, dictated by the military, but fell short of accomplishing its political aim. The military could not sustain themselves at the helm of the government even at the point of dudgeon. The leaders of the insurgent army were all slaughtered by a counter-coup engineered by a group of civil

officials under the tacit condonation of King Sun (Hyön-jong). Only a few months after their revolt, everything the military had instituted perished with them.

Another revision of the official stipend scale took place in 1034. Although we are left in the dark concerning the details of this revision, it seems to have contained some significant modifications to the earlier scale of 998. From its official title, we know that a new group of people called "hanin" were added to the new revised scale of 1034. However, because the term "hanin" appears for the first time in the Koryŏsa in this connection, we cannot grasp the exact meaning of the term. The word "han" in combination with other characters appears repeatedly in the Koryŏsa from this period on, but we are not at all sure of its meaning. The educated guess so far is that the hanin were military personnel in a status of inactive duty or unemployed yangban.⁷ In any case, the true significance of the new scale of 1034 does not seem to lie in its inclusion of the new group, but in the general increase of the civil officials' stipend. Because we lack a direct information on this increase, we must surmise it on the basis of circumstantial evidence.

First of all, the general conditions of the country at

⁷For the studies on the meaning of the "hanin," see: Ch'ŏn Kwan-u, "Hanin Ko--Koryŏ Ch'ogi ūi Chibang-t'ongje e Kwanhan Il'goch'al," Sahoegwahak, Vol. II (Mar., 1958), pp. 23-54; and Yi U-sŏng, "Hanin, Paekchŏng ūi Sin-haesŏk" Yŏksahakpo, Vol. XIX (Dec., 1962), pp. 53-89. Also see: Suematsu "Kōrai Shoki no..." p. 22; and Paek Nam-un, Chōsen Hōken-shakai Keizai shi, Chō (Tokyo, 1937), p. 69.

the time of the revision of 1034 should have been reflected in the revised scale. Unlike the growing urgency of war from which the earlier revision of 998 was evolved, by 1034, fifteen years had passed since the last Kitan invasion was repelled by the Koryō army. Already in 1031, Koryō felt sufficiently secure to suspend her tributary mission to Kitan though the move was admittedly to take advantage of an internal disunity within Kitan. More importantly, evidence indicates a general economic recovery from the war damages by this time.⁸ Secondly, the official measures enacted prior to 1034 suggest a continuous improvement in the position of the high ranking civil officials and an increasing power among the great aristocratic families. It was decreed in 1033, for example, that the officials above the lower third grade, the six Ministers and the nine Directors, did not need to dismount upon meeting princes of royal blood on the street.⁹ We can safely take this as an indication of the rising position of the great aristocratic officials in the government. It should not be too far from the truth if we deduce from these developments that the revision of the stipend scale in 1034 constituted, among other things, an improvement for the high official's stipend.

Indication of the growing power of the great families is found in the constant enlargement of the territory of the Capital District (Kyōnggi) which was marked out for the sajōn

⁸KRS 94:12a.

⁹KRS 84:8b-10a.

appropriation of the central officialdom.

A series of moves to enlarge the Capital District and change its administrative structure started in 1018. In this year, the Kaesŏng-bu, the Capital District Government set up since 995, was abolished. The area was then divided into two large administrative hyŏns and the heads of these hyŏns (Hyŏn-ryŏng) were placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Department of Ministries. The reorganization of the Capital District was obviously for the purpose of consolidating the economic control of the area by the great families whose members had become to dominate the central government. Even though in 1062 the Kaesŏng-bu was again restored by turning over the jurisdiction of the Capital District administration to the District Magistrate (Chi-busa) from the Department of Ministries, the District as the economic base of the yangban was enlarged by its addition of three new hyŏns.

The largest expansion of the Capital District, however, took place in 1069 when forty-one more hyŏns were added under its jurisdiction. This last expansion increased the arable land within the Capital District by one-fourth of the total arable land of the country.¹⁰ The ever-expanding size of the Capital District is significant because it indicates a corresponding increase in the amount of land specifically set aside

¹⁰KRS 78:38ab. Excluded from this calculation is the arable land in the two northern frontier provinces. The rents from these two provinces were appropriated for the military expenditure of the Northern Frontier Defense Commissions in the area.

for the central officials' sajōn appropriations. More specifically, it implies an increase in the amount of the land allocated to the regular official stipend appropriation, the kwa-jōn.

The significance of the constant expansion of territory under the Capital District is found in the Yangban Land-rent and Fuel-wood Scale of 1076. The revised scale of 1076 was the only official stipend scale made conclusive for the yangban. Although the yangban, as the central officials, were included in all previous stipend scales, the new scale differed from the earlier ones in that it covered the yangban exclusively for the first time and it also turned out to be the last revision that Koryō made to its official stipend scale. The new scale of 1076 kept the eighteen rate classification system. It also contained a significant change in the amounts of the stipends in comparison with the scale of 998. For example, the highest stipend, though still retaining the 100 kyōl of farm land, was nevertheless reduced in wooded land from 70 kyōl to 50 kyōl, and the lowest stipend, the eighteenth, went down to 17 kyōl from a previous 20 kyōl in farm land again receiving no wooded land. If we examine more closely the reduction rate of each stipend grade, we find that the highest official stipend was reduced between 976 and 1076 by only 1/11th in farm land and 5/11th in wooded land while the lowest stipend was reduced by 1/7th in farm land and 100 percent in wooded land. The same trend is observable if we compare the average reduction rates of the highest five sti-

pendis and the lowest five stipends. This means that there was a much sharper reduction for the lower grade than for the higher. In this connection, we must also take into account the fact that the lower we go down the scale, the nearer we approach the minimum subsistence level income. Furthermore, those outside the eighteenth grade were not even mentioned in the new scale, whereas in the earlier scales they received 15 to 17 kyōl of land.

If we take the average stipend rate for all the regular officials (the yangban) from the scales of 976, 998, and 1076, the figures stand as follows:¹¹

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>FARM LAND</u>	<u>WOODED LAND</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
976	68.5 kyōl	67.5 kyōl	135.7 kyōl
998	58.0 kyōl	32.0 kyōl	90.0 kyōl
1076	53.5 kyōl	18.9 kyōl	72.4 kyōl

A general decrease in the average stipend rate of both the farm and wooded land accompanied every revision in the scale. The continuous decrease in the rates of these scales is in sharp contrast to the steady increase in the total appropriation of the kwajōn. The answer to this contradiction must be sought in the increasing conversion of the sajōn of the Capital District into privately owned land by the great aristocratic families. In fact, a legal way for the powerful officials to own private land was already opened through the introduction of a "protective" land grant act in 1049. (See p. 218.) The

¹¹The table is taken from Suematsu, "Kōrai Shoki no..." p. 26.

act formally institutionalized the heritability of the sajon by introducing a new heritable sajon grant, and it tended apparently to help the aristocratic civil officials to become richer at the expense of the poor, low ranking officials, thus aggravating the economic differentiation among the official class itself.

There are several other noteworthy features in the new scale of 1076. One, there was a general improvement in the military officials' stipend in relation to that of the civil officials. The stipend of the highest ranking military official, the Superior General, was raised from the fifth to the third rate in the previous scale of 998. Such a raise is uniformly observable in all stipends of the military officials. Two, the scale of 1076 set a uniform rate between the titular and the functional positions in the civil service while it kept the different rates, as they were in the scale of 998, for those in the military service. The latter's stipends, however, were rearranged under the scale of 1076. Three, the stipends in the new scale reflected the rank standings in the eighteen grade official hierarchy more closely than the scale of 998 did. Even though not all new stipends corresponded to the exact rank standing of their positions, their approximation came much closer than ever before through the new adjustment. Four, the new scale included for the first time geomancers and monks in the lowest stipend group. The first three points are indicative of a slight improvement in the military officials' position, but in the principle of

of civil supremacy there was no change. The fourth point is interesting when we consider it in connection with the strong social and economic ties that were maintained between the yangban and the Buddhist monks, especially between the great aristocratic families and the high Buddhist hierarchy in Koryŏ. The two also formed, often on the basis of their kinships, a strong political alliance reminiscent of the similar political coalition between the great nobles and the monks in late Silla. The inclusion of the monk in the new scale might have been a reflection of such ties.

The increase of the economic power of the great aristocratic families is best expressed in the Act of the "Protective" Land-rent and Fuel-wood Grant (Kongŭm-jŏnsi-bŏp) of 1049. The establishment of the "protective" sajŏn grant is significant because it introduced a heritable sajŏn. Strictly speaking, however, the new act did not introduce the heritable sajŏn for the first time in Koryŏ; it only extended to all officials above lower fifth grade rank the sajŏn already in existence since the hunjŏn act of 976. By so doing, the new act made the heritable sajŏn, which was so far only an exception to the principle of state ownership of land, a legitimate and permanent part of the Koryŏ land system. Under the act officials of the first grade rank (both upper and lower) and those who held positions as the Executive of the Chancellery or higher duties received 25 kyŏl of farm land and 15 kyŏl of wooded land; the officials of the second grade rank (both upper and lower) and those who held positions as the

Executive Assistant of the Chancellery (Ch'amji-jōngsa) or higher duties were given 22 kyōl of farm land and 12 kyōl of wooded land; the officials of the third grade rank (both upper and lower) were given 20 kyōl of farm land and 10 kyōl of wooded land; the officials of the fourth grade rank (both upper and lower) were given 17 kyōl of farm land and 8 kyōl of wooded land; and the officials of the fifth grade rank (both upper and lower) were given 15 kyōl of farm land and 5 kyōl of wooded land. In other words, the officials of the lower fifth and higher grade rank secured a permanent and heritable economic basis under the act.

The exceptions, however, were made to the rule of the inheritance of the "protective" sajōn. First of all, there was a 5 kyōl deduction (which of the two category, the farm or wooded land, is not specified in the source) if the grantee held a titular position at the time of inheritance. Secondly, the inheritance was denied to those who rose to official positions after they had been relieved from the status of musicians, craftsmen, or from the so-called mean class. Also denied the right of inheritance were those descendants who committed treason or plotted revolt against the dynasty, those who were indicted for compliance in a treason, or those who had their names removed from the official roster of the yangban for "public and private crimes."¹² Thirdly, even if the son of the grantee was convicted by crimes other than

¹²KRS 78:15ab.

the ones listed above, the grandson of the grantee could inherit one-third of the protective sajōn grant provided that the grandson was clear of any criminal charge. These provisions make it clear who were to be the main beneficiaries of the act. Undoubtedly it was intended that the main beneficiaries of the new "protective" sajōn grant be the high ranking civil officials of aristocratic ancestry with proven loyalty for the new dynasty.

The formal establishment of the heritable sajōn might have an unavoidable consequence under the increasing power of high aristocratic officials who naturally wanted to insure full economic security for their descendants. But the exception made by this act to the principle of the state ownership of land was to undermine the very foundation of the Koryō land system. The new stipulation of heritability was not only a gross violation of the fundamental premise of the sajōn appropriation system, but it also implicitly approved the private ownership of land in Koryō. Although the act was a modest inception extending its privilege only to a limited number of people, the "protective" sajōn was bound to increase in time because of the permanence of the act as well as the heritable nature of the sajōn. Given man's natural inclination for material comfort and economic security, it was an inevitable consequence that the main beneficiaries of the act, who had the power to do so would go ahead to improvise more and more methods to acquire this type of sajōn income. Through its initial denial of private ownership of land and then making

a fatal exception to the rule, Koryŏ destroyed its land system.

After the introduction of the "protective" sajŏn act, practically nothing could stop the inevitable increase in the amount of privately owned and hereditary land. Because of the obvious advantages in possessing such land, the restricted number of recipients of the "protective" sajŏn grant grew steadily as time passed. With the available reservoir of reclaimable land limited, the "protective" sajŏn increased at the expense of other land that could be allocated for the kongjŏn and other sajŏn appropriations. Needless to say, the ever-growing "protective" sajŏn appropriation, while increasing the economic power of a few great aristocratic families, eventually caused a serious shortage of land for the other regular appropriations in Koryŏ. The fate of the dynasty, as it turned out to be, hinged on the solution of this critical misappropriation of land and Koryŏ fell largely because of her inability to solve this problem.

Another important source of income for the officials in this period was their annual salary in kind. In the scale announced in 1076 the salaries of the regular central officials in the two services were classified into forty-seven different rates ranging from the highest salary of 400 sŏk of rice to the lowest salary of 10 sŏk.¹³ Introducing the

¹³KRS 80:2a 4b. The sŏk was the largest unit in the traditional measure of capacity in Korea. Below sŏk was tu which is 1/15th of a sŏk.

list as the highest salaried officials were the heads of the three Departments; then came the Executives of these Departments receiving 34 sŏk less than their immediate superiors. The highest military official, the Superior General, received a salary of 300 sŏk which was the fifth highest on the list. Also in this category of salary were six Ministers, Policy Advisors, Chief Censor, Finance Commissioner, Head Hanlin Academician, and others who held the same upper third grade rank as the Superior General did. A few other important samples of the salaries of the rest of the yangban are: 233 sŏk 5 tu for the Grand General, six Directors of sub-ministerial offices, and Senior and Junior Executive Assistants of Department of Ministries (Sangsŏ-chwa-, u -sŭng); 200 sŏk for the Policy Reviewer (Kŭpsajung), Executive Censor (Ŏsa-jungsŭng), and General; 173 sŏk 5 tu for the Director of Astrology (Sach'ŏn-gam), the Director of Military Supplies (Kun'gi-gam), and Senior and Junior Policy Critics (Chwa-, U -ganŭi); 93 sŏk 5 tu for the General Censor (Si-ŏsa); 10 sŏk for the Editor (Chŏngŏn) and Law Instructor (Yulhak-chogyo); 200 sŏk for the Provincial Governor, etc.

The salaries in this scale follow relatively close to the standing rank of the recipients in the eighteen grade official hierarchy. As a matter of fact, the salary scale was the closest commensurate with the official ranking system among all the remuneration systems of early Koryŏ. Still the scale was not based on the official rank system but rather according to the official positions. The scale could not be

based solely on the rank system for the simple reason that the salaries of the officials were not determined by the ranks of the officials but by the positions held by the officials in the government. The discrepancies between the rank and position as they were reflected in the salaries were mostly confined to a few civil posts which were either powerful or had a duty that could easily provoke criticism. One such example was that of the Policy Critics of the Chancellery which received an annual salary of 173 sŏk 5 tu. Probably because of the power and prestige attached to this post, its holder received almost 27 sŏk less than the Executives of the six Ministries although they were all holders of the upper fourth grade rank. On the other hand, the Official Drafter of the Secretariat-Chancellery (Chungsŏ-sain) received an annual salary of 200 sŏk, as did the Executives of six Ministries, although his rank classification was lower fourth grade, one grade lower than the rank of the Executives of six Ministries. It is possible that his salary was relatively higher because of the sensitive nature and the vulnerability of his duty for criticism. It should be also noted that the military officials received as fair a salary relative to their official rank in their salary as they did in the revised official stipend scale of 1076.

Another significant point in the yangban salary scale of 1076 was the vast difference between the highest and lowest salaries. The difference was exactly 390 sŏk of rice out of the possible 400 sŏk, and this is thirty-nine times the

lowest salary of the yangban in the scale. It is certainly the widest gap among the all remuneration systems we have discussed so far. Needless to say, this enormous gap was more accurately the reflection of the political and social differentiation among the officials of the central government. The power and prestige vested in the high official positions made a few high echelons of the government the new aristocratic ruling group of Koryŏ. An examination of the structure and function of the central government will reveal the extent to which the new ruling aristocracy exercised the government power in Koryŏ.

Power Configuration in the Central Government

The Confucian oriented officials of early Koryŏ undertook a series of sweeping reorganizations of the central government. Through these reorganizations, the Koryŏ government basically took the form but not the substance of medieval Chinese government system. The major structure and functions of the central government will show that the power was concentrated in a few civil officials who held key positions in the government.

Of the three departments, the Royal Secretariat (Naesa-sŏng which later changed its name to Chungso-sŏng) was charged with preparing the royal edict and recommending official appointments to the king. The function of the Chancellery (Munha-sŏng), on the other hand, was to review the edict and the appointments before they were sent to the Department of

the Ministries (Sangsŏ-dosŏng) to be executed. The Chancellery was charged, therefore, with the duty of recommending reconsideration of a pending legislature or appointment to the king. The Chancellery also retained the right to withhold its confirmation to any measure approved by the king by simply voicing its dissent before him. Since no measure became effective, or should be executed, without the confirmation of the Chancellery, the Chancellor (Munha-sijung), in effect, enjoyed a virtual veto power over the king. Nevertheless, the Crown was the highest political authority of the kingdom.

The obvious conflict and over-lapping involved in the works of the Secretariat and the Chancellery eventually resulted in the merger of the two Departments into the Royal Secretariat-Chancellery in 1061. In this merger the Chancellor as the head of the Chancellery rather than the Secretary General (Chungsŏ-ryŏng) of the Royal Secretariat became the most powerful official in the new department. Equipped with the power of the initiation of legislation as well as the review of all official policies and appointments, the Secretariat-Chancellery became the power house of the central government in Koryŏ. It had the authority not only to check the decision of the king but also to scrutinize all officials in the kingdom as the chief supervisory agency of the government under the Crown.

Under the Chancellor and the Secretary General were their deputies, the Executives of the Secretariat-Chancellery (Chunsŏ-munha-sirang-, Chunsŏ-munha - p'yŏngjangsa) who varied in

number between two and four, their two Executive Assistants (Ch'amji-jǒngsa and Chǒngdang-munhak), and one Administrative Assistant (Chi-munha-sǒngsa). The Chancellor, the Secretary General, and their deputies were known collectively as the councillors of state (chaesin) along with the Presiding Minister (Sangsǒryǒng) of the Department of the Ministries, his two deputies, the Senior and Junior Executives of the Department (Chwa-, U -boksa), and one Administrative Assistant (Chi-sǒngsa). But it was only the councillors of state from the Secretariat-Chancellery minus the Secretary General who comprised the presidium members of the Privy Council (Todang or Tobyǒngmasa) as the Council's Superintendents (P'ansa).¹⁴ As the highest deliberative organ of the kingdom, the Privy Council also included in its regular councillors the six Commissioners of the Supreme Security Council and all the officials who held the functional positions of lower third and higher grade rank. It is important to point out that the Privy Council is generally believed to have functioned very much in the tradition of the Silla Hwabaek Council. It deliberated on the important questions of state, thus furnishing a forum for the collective leadership of the Koryǒ ruling aristocracy as the Hwabaek did for the old Sillan

¹⁴KRS 77:22b. The exclusion of the Secretary General from the Council's presidium membership is not at all clear. But it is possible that his exclusion from the presidium membership (not from the regular membership of the Council) was due to his official position which was relatively closer to the Crown than the rest of the councillors of state in the Secretariat-Chancellery.

aristocratic leadership.

In addition to the councillors of state, the Department of the Secretariat-Chancellery had a group of officials commonly known as the officials of the policy criticism (nangsa). Their special function was to review all drafted edicts and all nominations for official appointments before the Department stamped its formal approval on these measures.¹⁵ Their duties made the officials of the policy criticism the key members of the Department. Totaling about ten in number, they included the Senior and Junior Policy Critics, the Policy Reviewer, the Editor of the Court Diary (Kigōju), the Senior and Junior Reparationers (Chwa-, U -bogwöl), and the Senior and Junior Completioners (Chwa-, U -sūbyu). On the shoulders of these relatively young officials in the ranks of fourth to sixth grades fell the Department's function of reviewing all government measures. In theory, they were supposed to perform their duties free from their superiors' undue influence or improper dictation; and their counter-signatures were required on all royal decrees and official appointments before they could become effective. In practice, however, these officials often followed the leadership of prominent councillors of state. Their power seems to have been simply too enticing not to be utilized by unscrupulous high officials. Often joined by the Censors, they exerted

¹⁵Kim Yong-dök, "Koryō-sidae ūi Sōgyōng e Taehayō," Yi Pyōng-do Paksa Hwagap Kinyōm Nonch'ong, (Seoul, 1956), pp. 471-493

an effective influence on the king in the use of royal prerogatives. When the king did not heed their advice or dissent, they sometimes refused to show up in their offices, thus paralyzing important government operations. They even persisted in their refusals to attend to their duties until their demands were met. Through such insolent tactics they could readily turn their official functions into effective checks on the power of the king or a weapon to force their will upon him. Yet, they were safe from any arbitrary retaliation or prosecution from the king on account of their position, for, like the officials of the Censorate, they were protected from reprisal. Throughout the early Koryŏ period, there seems to have been no action of retaliation by the king against the officials of policy criticism simply because of their official dissent. Under the circumstances, the prestige of the officials of the policy criticism was bound to rise and appointments to these positions were bound to be very selective and restrictive. In fact, as we shall see, the positions were filled only by carefully selected officials who invariably possessed excellent family backgrounds as well as high moral and ethical principles.

In addition to the virtual veto power over the legislative and appointive process of the government, the Department of the Secretariat-Chancellery also exercised supervisory control over all the important government organs, especially the six Ministries, the Finance Commission and the Hanlin Academy. Although the six Ministries were formally placed

under the Department of the Ministries, the latter headed by the Presiding Minister was no more than a mere coordinating body for the various Ministries. The actual government business was usually conducted through the six Ministries and their subordinate agencies, and the Ministries were placed under the direct supervision of the Secretariat-Chancellery through a superintendent. By stipulation, the Superintendent of each Ministry was made a concurrent duty of a councillor of state, frequently from the Secretariat-Chancellery. The Administrators (Chi-busa) of all Ministries were also concurrent positions although they need not be the officials of the Secretariat-Chancellery. In addition to these positions, other important ministerial positions including the minister-ship were frequently held by the officials of the Department of the Secretariat-Chancellery. It should be noted, however, that all concurrent positions might not have been used for the purpose of check and control. Instead, they might have served just as well for the purpose of co-ordination and economy in the government. But the fact that a councillor of state held two or three positions concurrently should have been for the purpose of control.

Another important government agency upon which the Secretariat-Chancellery exercised its supervisory control was the Finance Commission (Samsa). The Commission existed under the same name since the days of Wang Kōn and was undoubtedly the highest agency which handled the government finances. In spite of the existence of the Ministry of Revenue (Sangsō-hobu)

under the Department of Ministries, the Commission apparently took charge of the government budget and other government financial responsibilities. Evidence indicates that the Commission had control over determining the source of all government revenue including the collection of taxes, and the payment of all emoluments to the officials.¹⁶ The Commission's authority over the tax is indicated, for instance, in the channel through which the official report on the tax was transmitted. It started with the village chief as the lowest tax authority in the field and the Commission as the highest authority in the central government; thus the village official reported on the village tax collection to the local government, which, in turn, sent all tax reports of its locality to the Ministry of Revenue, and then the Ministry finally sent them to the Finance Commissioner.¹⁷ This chain of authority on the government tax clearly indicates that the Commission assumed final responsibility of the government finances. The Secretariat-Chancellery's supervisory control over the Commission was also exercised through a councillor of state from the Department who served concurrently as the Superintendent of the Commission.

The Secretariat-Chancellery also had a built-in supervisory control over the Hanlin Academy. The importance of the Academy as the highest custodian of the official ideology

¹⁶KRS 8:19b; 78:44b f, 45b; 95:24b, 31a.

¹⁷KRS 78:43a.

was assiduously cultivated by the Confucian scholar-officials in Koryŏ. Since King Ch'i's reign, the Academy actively participated in the propagation of Confucian ideology among the officials and populace. The Academy also assumed the important task of providing royal tutors for Confucian classics and other subjects. Although the Academy's activities did not always keep the pace set during King Ch'i's reign, its influence as the custodian of the official ideology was always very strong throughout the Koryŏ Dynasty. Because of their scholarly reputation the academicians carried with them considerable influence in the government. The officials of the Secretariat-Chancellery usually kept a tight grip on the Academy although its formal supervisory function was only limited to the position of the Superintendent who was also a councillor of state.

At least two more central agencies of the early Koryŏ government, the Censorate (Ŏsa-dae) and the Supreme Security Council (Chungch'u-wŏn) require our attention because of their important official functions and their close link to the Secretariat-Chancellery. In theory, the function of the officials of the Censorate called for the surveillance of all the officials, irrespective of their duty or rank, on behalf of the Crown; the Censorate officials were to inform the king of any misconduct of government affairs or the officials' immoral or unethical behavior in violation of the accepted code. In performing their duties, they were given the freedom of action and the protection from reprisal of

any sort.¹⁸ Although the duty of the Censorate was primarily to protect the interests of the dynasty as agents of the Crown, in actual practice, the Koryŏ censors more often acted against the Crown through their incessant surveillance and relentless criticism of royal decisions. They rarely protected the royal prerogatives against the encroachments of the officials.¹⁹ Moreover, in their criticism of the monarch's actions, the censors frequently acted in cooperation with the officials of the policy criticism in the Secretariat-Chancellery under the leadership of the aristocratic councillors of state.

The frequent unity in the official actions of the Censorate and the Secretariat-Chancellery can be explained by the fact that the individual officials in these two agencies had identical interests as members of the aristocratic ruling group in the Koryŏ officialdom. Such a situation was deliberately created through the imposition of highly restrictive qualifications in the selection of the officials of these offices. These qualifications required from the candidate an unusually good family background in both his and his wife's patrilineage and matrilineage as well as exceptional talent, a good Confucian education, and high moral and ethical standards. In other words, the positions of powerful official remonstrance in the Censorate and the Secretariat-Chancellery were saved for the officials who came from the aristocratic

¹⁸Kim Yong-dŏk, "Koryŏ-sidae ūi...". pp. 472-473.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 483-485.

social stratum.

In this connection, it is also interesting to note that the high ranking officials of the Censorate usually held a concurrent position in other branches of the government, especially in the six Ministries. The fact that this system of dual duties, as has been observed already, functioned as a means of control for the Secretariat-Chancellery over other agencies leads us to the conclusion that even the Censorate was not saved from such subservient use by the Secretariat-Chancellery. In the case of the Censorate, it undoubtedly served for the purpose of control more effectively and more directly because of the nature of its official duty. All in all, there seems to be little doubt about who controlled the Censorate. It was the aristocratic ruling group in the civil service, the same group who controlled the powerful Secretariat-Chancellery.

The control of government by this group was not limited to the civil branch of the government, but was extended also to the military branch. The composition of the Commissioners of the Supreme Security Council reflects their control of the military establishments. Known under the name of Chiksuk, prior to the adoption of the Chinese name from a similar Sung office in 991, the Council deliberated on all important questions concerning the palace security and national defense. Even though the questions deliberated by the Council were highly military in nature, the Council was completely staffed by civil officials above the third grade rank. Moreover, the

five Commissioners of the Council usually held a concurrent position in the three Departments, and their rank classification was the lower second grade. It is obvious that the rank classification for the Council's five Commissions was intended to exclude even the highest military officials so as to avoid any possibility of military domination of the Council. Through their domination of the Council, the ruling civil officials of the aristocratic ancestry could--and actually did--extend their control over the military forces.

Further evidence for the control of the military forces by the civilian ruling aristocracy is found in the system of biannual military duty for selected civil officials of the fourth grade as the Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners of the two Northern Frontier Defense Commissions (Tongsō-bungmyōn-byōngmasa).²⁰ The Commissions, established in 989 as the major defense commands against the possible Kitan invasion, had jurisdiction over both military and civil affairs of the northern frontiers and were placed directly under the authority of the Privy Council. As we have already seen, the Privy Council was the highest deliberative body of the kingdom, composed as it was of the councillors of state and the Commissioners of the Supreme Security Council. This means that the Commissioners of the Northern Frontier Defense Commissions received their directives from their civilian superiors in the Privy Council, and functioned as

²⁰ Suematsu Yasukazu, "Kōrai Heibashi Kō," Tōyō-gakuhō, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 (June, 1956), pp. 8-25.

civil officials although their duties were basically military in nature.

Nowhere on the highest levels of the military decision-making bodies do we find any military official charged with major responsibility. The area of duty saved for the military officials was strictly confined to the field military units where they served as the commanders of the six *Wi* and two *Kun*, and where the technical skills of the professional soldiers were presumably best utilized for the most effective result. It is evident that the military officials were completely barred from positions of political responsibility in the early *Koryŏ* government. It is also evident that even among the civil officials only a small number from a carefully selected group actually had access to power, and they in fact, ran the government through an intricate system of control. Under the circumstances, it is small wonder that the reorganized government of early *Koryŏ* in time produced a new oligarchical aristocracy who dominated the government and perpetuated themselves in power for generations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RULING STRATUM OF EARLY KORYŎ

The New Aristocratic Families

The reorganized government of early Koryŏ, as we have already observed, placed the power of the government in the hands of a few key officials. The new system of hierarchy was set up essentially to safeguard the power of this group by a system of graduated authority in government. It was only natural that under the new system a few high ranking officials would develop into an oligarchical aristocratic ruling stratum through the efficacy of their new authority and influence in the government. They insured the monopoly of government power for their children by excluding children of lower ranking officials and non-yangban classes from the privileges of higher education and the civil service examination. While they built unsurmountable barriers for the children of the less privileged classes, they endeavored to insure an exclusive and uninterrupted succession of power by their descendants. To achieve this, a system of recommendation and a system of "protected" officials were instituted.

The system of official recommendation was introduced in Koryŏ by King Ch'i.¹ In 992 he called on every central official above the lower fifth rank to recommend a man of talent

¹KRS 75:10a.

and virtue for the consideration of official appointment. Later, in 1006, King Song (Mok-chong) limited the privilege of recommendation to the civil officials who had the regular court audience and he also made the recommending officials responsible for the performance of their recommendee after his appointment.² These actions clearly indicate that the recommendation system was designed only for the benefit of aristocratic civil officials. Moreover, these aristocratic officials used the recommendation privilege to further their own interests through a mutual recommendation of the children of their own peers. Only in rare instances did they go outside their own peer group to choose a young man of promising talent for the recommendation. Throughout early Koryŏ, there is only one such instance recorded in the Koryŏsa. And even this case does not preclude a possibility of kinship between the patron and his protege.³ In any case, it is evident that the recommendation system furnished an important avenue for the children of high aristocratic officials to enter the government service.

More important as a device for perpetuating power in the hands of aristocratic high officials was the system of "protected" officials. According to this system a son or grandson of any official with the rank of fifth grade or higher automatically received an official appointment when he reached

²KRS 75:13a.

³KRS 94:39b.

the age of 18 se.⁴ The system was intended apparently to offer less gifted aristocratic descendants an official career even when they failed the civil service examination. Those who took advantage of the system of "protected" officials apparently suffered no disadvantage in their official advancement on account of it. Obviously they were treated in the same capacity as those who entered the government service through the civil service examination. This might be due to the fact that those who benefited most from the system were the members of the ruling aristocratic families.

Who were then the members of the new ruling stratum in early Koryŏ? From which social group did they come? Were they heirs of the former Silla aristocracy or were they non-Silla aristocratic descendants? What was their political and intellectual outlook? What was the style of their statesmanship? Did the early Koryŏ ruling stratum constitute a significant break from the Silla ruling stratum? The answers to these questions will reveal the nature of the new ruling class and their relationship with the past.

By examining the official careers of members of the most prominent families of the time, we can gain some insight to the social composition of the new ruling stratum as well as to the nature of the new oligarchical aristocracy in early Koryŏ. We shall open our investigation with the Ch'oe clan of Kyŏngju. The activities of some of the clan members have already become

⁴KRS 75:25b.

familiar to us through Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn, Ch'oe Ŏn-wi, Ch'oe Sŭng-no, and Ch'oe Yang. The Ch'oe clan, which probably belonged formerly to the Silla aristocratic stratum of the Yuktup'um, became an important member of the Koryŏ ruling stratum. It was largely through the clan tradition of high scholarship that the clan members entered the government service in Koryŏ. The first known member to become active in Koryŏ was Ch'oe Ŏn-wi, who, like his cousin Ch'i-wŏn, was educated in China and held a T'ang Chin-shih degree. After spending a good part of his adult life in China he returned to Korea to serve as a high official in Silla.⁵ When Wang Kŏn founded the new dynasty, Ŏn-wi came to Koryŏ and became tutor for the crown prince serving also as a Hanlin Academician until his death in 943. Although he had four sons, only one, Kwang-wŏn, seems to have led a normal official life in Koryŏ. The others either met untimely deaths or else they could not leave China where they had gone to study.⁶ Kwang-wŏn had a relatively successful career in the Koryŏ government, rising to the Deputy Director of the Loyal Library (Pisŏ-sogam), a

⁵The offices which Ch'oe Ŏn-wi held in Silla were the deputy to the Chief Minister (Chipsa-sŏng-sirang), one of the highest positions for the Yuktup'um (hence an indication of his Bone status), and the Academician of the Sŏsŏ-wŏn. KRS 92:10a.

⁶The eldest son became a captive of Kitan while studying in China and was detained by the Kitans to serve in their government. The second son managed to come back to Korea after his study in China and served under King So until he fell as a victim of the great purge of 960. (See p. 119.) Nothing is known of the last son. Probably he died at an early age. KRS 92:10b.

position of lower fourth grade rank. But after his brother Haeng-gwi fell as a victim of the great purge of 960, Kwang-wŏn seems barely to have transmitted the family tradition to his son, Kang.

Kang passed the Koryŏ civil service examination with a top score in 991 when he was 20 se. Impressed by his performance at the examination, King Ch'i immediately appointed him as the Junior Completioner and made him a drafter of royal edicts in the Secretariat-Chancellery. The Junior Completioner, an official of lower sixth grade rank, was one of the powerful officials of policy criticism in the Secretariat-Chancellery. Although it was the lowest ranking official of the policy criticism the position was usually reserved only for an official of exceptional qualifications because of its power and prestige. Behind his unusual appointment was then the eminent family background of the Ch'oe clan. This is also supported by his subsequent appointment to the more powerful position of Official Drafter in the Secretariat-Chancellery by jumping four grades in a single promotion.⁷

When King Song succeeded his uncle Ch'i to the throne, Kang became the young king's confidant. The young king sought the counsel of Kang for his political decisions. During the king's reign (997-1009) Kang was twice made the examiner of the civil service examination. On these two occasions, he passed thirty-two Chinsa and seven Myŏnggyŏng

⁷KRS 93:30a.

candidates. His two top candidates, Hwang Chu-ryang and Ch'oe Ch'ung, eventually climbed to the highest position of Chancellorship. These two statesmen are the only known names among the thirty-two candidates Kang passed; but he is said to have passed many successful candidates who later turned out to be successful statesmen.⁸ During King Song's reign Kang also became the Executive to the Ministry of Civil Personnel (Ibu-sirang) and then was raised to the Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council which made him a holder of lower second grade rank. In the latter capacity, Kang got involved with the political upheaval of 1009 which was caused by a power struggle between the regular ruling civil officials and a challenger to their position, Kim Ch'i-yang.⁹ Largely because of his close affiliation with the king, who was deposed and later murdered by his officials, Kang was demoted in rank and experienced a temporary set-back in his career.

Under the new King Sun (Hyön-jong) who was enthroned by the ruling civil officials following the power struggle, Kang became the Head Hanlin Academician and the Senior Policy Advisor. The new king also relied upon him with great confidence. As the grandson of a former Silla princess married to Wang Kōn, King Sun had reasons to lean toward the officials of Silla aristocratic ancestry like Kang. Kang was soon made royal tutor by the new king and he received the new appoint-

⁸Loc. cit.

⁹KRS 127:4b=5b.

ments to the powerful positions of the Executive Assistant of Secretariat-Chancellery and the Minister of Civil Personnel in 1012. In his new official capacity as a councillor of state, Kang was again able to exert a powerful influence on the government policy. Before his official retirement in 1020 he had risen to the Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery and had also added a few more important titles including those of meritorious subject and Founding Viscount (Kaeguk-cha) with the sigup of five hundred households. The mere traces of his official career sufficiently prove his membership in the inner circle of the Koryŏ aristocratic leadership.

It is significant that in 1020, the year of Kang's retirement, the much celebrated ancestor of his clan, Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn, was posthumously granted a titular title as the Secretary-General of the Koryŏ government although he never served personally in the Koryŏ Dynasty. Ch'i-wŏn's name was also placed in the Koryŏ Confucian Tabernacle as the first Sillan scholar so honored. He was later followed by Sŏl Ch'ong, also a famed Confucian scholar and prefect of the Idu writing system in Silla of the seventh century. The two men were the only Silla officials to receive such a high honor and the posthumous title of Marquis in Koryŏ. These unusual actions, needless to say, were by-products of the upsurge of officials of Silla aristocratic ancestry in the ruling stratum of the Koryŏ Dynasty at this time. And Ch'oe Kang was only one of the officials. It is significant that these actions were taken during the reign of King Sun who was directly related

to the former Silla royal house through his grandmother. All of these facts emphasize the formal link that existed between the ruling classes of Silla and Koryŏ.

Of the immediate descendants of Ch'oe Kang, only the names of the two sons and a son-in-law appear in our sources. But the fact that they all reached high positions in the hierarchy of the Koryŏ officialdom is good proof of the continuous prominence of the clan in the Koryŏ ruling stratum even after Kang's death in 1024. Brief statements on his children in the Koryŏsa disclose that his elder son, Yu-bu, managed to become a councillor of state as indicated by his appointment to the Superintendent of the Ministry of Justice (Hyŏngbu-p'ansa). His rise in the official hierarchy undoubtedly owed much to his father's fame.¹⁰ Another son, Yŏng-bu, seems also to have reached a high position in the government although his name appears only once in the source as a high official of the Ch'ŏnan Tohubu. Yi Chak-ch'ung, the son-in-law, had already become the Senior Completioner in the Secretariat-Chancellery when Kang was still active in the government. Chak-ch'ung continued a distinguished official career, ultimately reaching to the position of councillor of state.¹¹

Another famed family of the Ch'oe clan of Kyŏngju was that of Ch'oe Sŭng-no. We have already discussed Sŭng-no's colorful career. His son, Suk, apparently rose as high as

¹⁰KRS 93:31ab.

¹¹KRS 6:27b f.

Sŭng-no himself in the government although Suk's name appears only a few times in the Koryŏsa. The relative neglect of him may be due to his apparently close association with the deposed King Song. The posthumous honor given to Suk when his name was placed in the royal tabernacle of King Song suggests the existence of a close tie with the king. Whatever the relationship might have been, there is little doubt that Suk belonged to the inner circle of the Koryŏ ruling stratum. This is indicated by the fact that he rose to be the Chancellor in his official career.¹²

Suk's son, Chae-an, also had a brilliant official career which stretched out for the reigns of the four consecutive kings. The high offices he held included the Junior Chief Secretary of the Heir Apparent (T'aeja-usŏ), the Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council, and the Minister of both Revenue and Civil Personnel. In 1036 he received an appointment as the Senior Executive of the Department of Ministries and the Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council, and in the following year he added to his official responsibilities another important duty as the Assistant Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery. In 1043 he became the Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery and the Superintendent of the Ministry of Revenue, and soon after this, he became the Chancellor, thus receiving the same honor enjoyed by his father and grandfather. This illustrates the tendency in the Koryŏ

¹²KRS 8:4b; 10:8a; 60:34b.

aristocratic families to perpetuate power among themselves. The offices Chae-an held were mostly key positions in the central government, which were as a rule preserved for the officials of good family background and exceptional talent. Upon Chae-an's death in 1046, the government gave a special appointment of an eighth grade position to his son, although his son was still under eighteen years, the legal age for government service. The boy was also granted a given name, "Succeeding the Merit" (Kye-hun) as a special honor in memory of his father. Unfortunately our sources end the coverage of Ch'oe Sŭng-no's family with the death of Chae-an.

No less famous as an eminent scholarly clan and an important official family was the Ch'oe clan of Haeju, especially the family of Ch'oe Ch'ung. Unfortunately our sources say nothing about his ancestral origin. However, in view of the fact that he received Confucian education from an early age, and since his surname, Ch'oe, belonged to a prominent aristocratic clan in Silla, it seems almost certain that he came from a high aristocratic family. His brilliant official career also supports this assertion. As a young boy, he is said to have liked his study and he did especially well in literature. When he took his chinsa degree examination in 1005, he passed it with special distinction. The examination which he took was conducted by Ch'oe Kang, as has been noted already. After the examination he entered the official career set for him as a member of the Koryŏ ruling aristocracy. The offices which he held during his long career were mostly the key positions of

the government including those of the policy criticism, the Hanlin Academy, the Supreme Security Council, the Ministry of Rites, and the Secretariat-Chancellery. In 1047, he finally rose to become the Chancellor. Two years after, Koryŏ introduced the "protective" sajŏn grant which, as we have seen, gave high ranking officials a special hereditary income. The act was probably of his making. In 1053 when he reached the official retirement age of 70 se, he was retained in the government service by King Hwi (Mun-jong) in the capacity of ch'isa and additional higher honorary titles were conferred upon him, which reflected his power and influence in the government. His biographer in the Koryŏsa says, in fact, that his advice was always sought on important government policies even while he was at home in retirement.¹³

Despite the incomplete account of his brilliant career as it is related to us through the Koryŏsa, there is little doubt about the powerful position which he occupied in the ruling stratum. His official activities, in fact, extended over many important areas of work. While serving as a councillor of state in the Secretariat-Chancellery, he was once commissioned by King Hyŏng (Chŏng-jong) to direct the fortification work in the northwestern frontier region which resulted in the construction of two major garrisons and fourteen other defense outposts. On another occasion, as the Chancellor, he directed the re-examination of the legal codes, the calligraphy, and

¹³KRS 95:4b.

the accounting methods and improved upon all of them. His most important contribution, however, resulted from his unofficial activity in the field of education. He founded a private school for aristocratic children to prepare them for the civil service examination and for government service. In a short span of time, he developed the school into one of the most coveted institutions for the aristocratic children in Koryŏ. Nearly all of the graduates were said to have passed the civil service examination.¹⁴ The phenomenal growth of this school as well as similar schools established by other high ranking officials at this time eventually drove the state university almost into oblivion. The popularity of these private schools became so great that in time they became formal training centers for the potential leaders and they completely outshined the government schools in Koryŏ.

The unusual popularity of such institutions seems to have resulted partly from the great influence of their founders in the government, which apparently benefitted the students in the course of their official careers. Out of fourteen candidates whom Ch'oe Ch'ung passed when he was the official examiner of the civil service examination in 1035, three ultimately reached the position of Executive Assistant of the Secretariat-Chancellery, three others climbed to positions of various Ministers, and another four became Hanlin Academicians in the course of their official careers.¹⁵ Such an unusual

¹⁴KRS 95:5b.

¹⁵Yi Pyŏng-do, Hanguksa--Chungse-p'yŏn, p. 234..

array of successful careers made by the proteges of a single official must have been an enticing thought to the career conscious students and their parents. The biographer of Ch'oe Ch'ung in the Koryŏsa says that the school started by him later supplied all of the candidates for the civil service examinations.¹⁶ Although we need not take these words literally, they do point out the great popularity of his school at the time. Meanwhile, we should not forget that a significant reason for the school's popularity was its excellent teaching facilities and its high academic standards.

Because of his educational contribution, Ch'oe Ch'ung was misleadingly called by his contemporaries a Confucius of Korea. Although he undoubtedly raised the prestige of private educational institutions above that of the government schools in Koryŏ, actually he was neither the first founder of private schools in Korea nor was he, like Confucius, an advocator of equal opportunities in education. Long before him, Sillan scholars like Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn taught students in private institutions, though smaller and less permanent than Ch'oe Ch'ung's. Ch'ung advocated no revolutionary changes on the important question of who should receive education as Confucius did in China. All available evidence indicates that Ch'ung followed the established concept in Koryŏ that education, like the government service, was only for the ruling class. It is safe to assume that, at least, all the students gathered around

¹⁶KRS 95:5b.

him were children of the ruling aristocracy of the time.

Furthermore, in his political beliefs, Ch'ung was a staunch supporter of a government by the selected few. When he was the Chancellor, he once tried to block the admission of a certain Yi Sin-sök to the government service. Yi had successfully passed the civil service examination but his family name was not registered on the official roster of aristocratic families because of his own grandfather's negligence. Although there was no doubt among the officials about his aristocratic origins, nevertheless Ch'ung was unwilling to concede Yi's right to an official career. Ch'ung's attempt was overruled by the king with the support of other high officials at the time, but a few years later another decree, originating in the Secretariat-Chancellery, formally acknowledged that any person whose family name was not registered on the roster should henceforth be categorically disqualified from the civil service examination.¹⁷ This reversed the previous ruling in the case of Yi Sin-sök and it represented the final victory of Ch'oe Ch'ung to restrict the eligibility of the civil service. After that time, all but registered aristocratic families were barred from the examination, and only a restricted number of established families, like the Ch'oe clan, could enjoy the fruits of government service. Although the regulation took place after Ch'ung had reached his official retirement age, it might very well have been his work since

¹⁷KRS 73:3b-4a.

he was still exercising powerful influence in his official post-retirement capacity of the Chancellor and Secretary General. In any case, there is little doubt about Ch'oe Ch'ung's conviction that the aristocracy should have control in Koryŏ.

The pinnacle of power reached by Ch'oe Ch'ung was also the proof to the oligarchical membership of his family. The family's position is evident in the eminent official careers of his descendants who apparently enjoyed the same prestige and power Ch'ung enjoyed in his career. Out of his two sons, Yu-sŏn, the elder of the two, started his official career with a position in the Hanlin Academy and a seventh grade rank, both unusually high starts for someone who had just passed his chinsa examination. At the time, Ch'oe Ch'ung himself held the powerful position of Junior Policy Critic (an upper fourth grade position) and he was just about to assume another duty as the Junior Chief Advisor of the Heir Apparent. When Yu-sŏn was appointed to the Censor for Miscellaneous Affairs (Ŏsajaptan), his father was the Chancellor. Yu-sŏn's appointment seems to have caused no alarm in the official quarter; for there seems to have been no possibility of conflict in interests between the two official duties. In fact, the absence of alarm bears witness to the formal, close coordination maintained between the Censorate and the Chancellery in discharging their duties or even the actual control of the former organ by the latter, which may be expected of the practice of government in Koryŏ. In other words, there seems to have been nothing in the

functions of the Koryŏ Censorate to necessitate the censors' becoming formal watch-dogs over the Chancellery on the behalf of the Crown. The censors seem to have maintained surveillance, on the contrary, over the conduct of the crown on behalf of the Chancellery.

Yu-sŏn's career apparently was made to follow his father's as closely as possible. His subsequent major assignments included the Hanlin Academician, the Administrator of the Supreme Security Council, the Superintendent of the Ministry of Rites (Yebu-p'ansa), the Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery and finally the Chancellor. When Yu-sŏn reached the height of his career, his influence in the government seems to have been greater than even his father's. He is said to have been regarded with esteem by all, even though there is little indication that he actually possessed any unusual talent or exceptional qualities of leadership. His influence is revealed in an unusual incident that occurred in court.¹⁸ On one occasion, thoroughly incensed by the insulting contents of a memorial submitted by Censor Mo Tan, King Hwi ordered Mo Tan to be arrested on the spot. Yu-sŏn vigorously protested that His Majesty's action was a violation of the established rule which required any accused official to be arrested and tried only by the appropriate official agency of the government. The King was compelled to heed to Yu-sŏn's protest. This episode tells us of an interesting restriction placed on the

¹⁸KRS 95:7b.

royal authority in Koryŏ. Under the rule, the Crown was specifically prohibited from an arbitrary exercise of personal justice when the case involved an official. The Koryŏ king was obviously denied absolute power. Moreover, when he tried to act in a clear violation of this rule, a high ranking official could stop him from doing so. It is noteworthy that at least once Yu-sŏn referred to the Wang Kŏn's Ten Article Injunction in his remonstrance to King Hwi's action.¹⁹

Yu-gil, the younger son of Ch'oe Ch'ung, also rose in time to be a councillor of state. Although he did not leave much record behind him, there is little doubt that he was among the ranking officials of power and influence in his day. Ch'ung's grandsons also enjoyed brilliant official careers. The most prominent among them were Sa-ch'wi and Sa-jae, the sons of Yu-gil and Yu-sŏn, respectively. Their official careers differ little from those of their immediate ancestors in success, and they shed still more light on the actual power position of the ruling aristocracy. First of all, the same success in all their careers bears witness to their unquestionable status in the Koryŏ ruling stratum. Because of his family's prominence, Sa-ch'wi, for example, could establish a personal friendship with King Hwi and, moreover, after his successful Chinsa examination, his rise in the officialdom was smooth and rapid. During his forty long years of government service, Sa-ch'wi seems to have developed a status for himself which was unusual

¹⁹Loc. cit.

even for the formidable aristocratic leaders of Koryŏ. His influence in the government is related by his biographer in the Koryŏsa in a telling story on the occasion of his official retirement. His role in the government is expressed by Executive of the Chancellery, Wi Kye-jŏng, when Wi says, "While Honorable Ch'oe was in the government, we all looked upon him like the mountain and the Dipper (as an exemplar). For all important matters of the state, we all like one listened to his suggestions. If he tells us his retirement now, what would happen to the government!"²⁰ The reliance upon Su-ch'wi for policy guidance was not limited to the officials, but it extended to the monarchs as well. This is disclosed by King Ong (Suk-chong) at a royal banquet for the honor of Sa-ch'wi's retirement. The king poured wine personally for Sa-ch'wi and held the latter's hand, saying "If you insist on your retirement, with whom shall I attend to the business of government! I have treated the wise with honor and the old with respect and reliance. I can hardly bear the thought of complying to the request of your retirement."²¹ King Ong, it should be pointed out, was by no means a weak monarch among the Koryŏ kings. On the contrary, the king was a man of strong will and lofty ambition. As a grand duke, he became the rallying point for the officials who stood in opposition to the domination of the government by Yi Cha-ŭi and later he ascended to the throne

²⁰KRS 96:2a.

²¹Loc. cit.

after forcing his young nephew to abdicate in his favor. He was also an erudite and able monarch. His reign saw several noticeable achievements including a spread in the use of coinage in Koryŏ. We should, therefore, take his utterance on the occasion of Sa-ch'wi's retirement as a genuinely sincere expression of a conscientious monarch for the loss of his dependable minister. Sa-ch'wi was also made to be a meritorious subject and Marquis with a sigūp of one thousand and five hundred households.²²

He was apparently a staunch supporter of the civil supremacy as it was shown in his severe punishment of a group of disgruntled generals who attempted to take up their cause by an armed revolt but without success.²³ Under the circumstances, we can say that Sa-ch'wi could wield so much influence in the government because he was a powerful member of the Koryŏ ruling stratum.

The rest of the clan members also flourished in their official careers. Sa-ch'wi's two sons, Wŏn and Chin, and his three sons-in-law, Yi Cha-gyŏm, Mun Kong-mi, and Yu In-jo, in time all became powerful councillors of state. Sa-jae, though the only known son of Yu-sŏn, left little record behind him, but he too rose to be the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery and the Superintendent of Ministry of Civil Personnel in addition to a custodial title of the Grand Master of Works

²²KRS 96:2b.

²³KRS 96:1b.

(Su-sagong). Sa'jae's son, Yak, also rose to be the Minister of Rites and a Hanlin Academician, even though his official career once suffered a set-back because of a malicious slander. Besides these members, there were many others in the Ch'oe clan of Haeju who rose high in the Koryŏ government although their records seem to have disappeared in the oblivion of history. In fact, the biographer of Ch'oe Ch'ung in the Koryŏsa notes that among his descendants, those who rose to occupy the state councillorship numbered several tens in all.²⁴ The Ch'oe clan continued to supply many distinguished scholar-officials throughout the Koryŏ and Yi dynasties. Ch'oe Cha (1188-1260) and Ch'oe Mal-li (15th century) are but two of the better known names

The Great Consort Family, Yi Clan of Kyŏngwŏn

None of the aristocratic families seem to have accumulated more power and had a better chance of upsetting the balance of power in the ruling stratum than did the Yi clan of Kyŏngwŏn, in the first two centuries of Koryŏ history. The Yi clan, which descended from a high ranking Silla aristocratic family, was a relative newcomer in the ruling stratum of Koryŏ in the first quarter of the eleventh century. Although the family settled permanently in Kyŏngwŏn (present Inchŏn) sometime before the establishment of Koryŏ, Yi Hŏ-gyŏm, the earliest clan ancestor known by name, did not seem to have held a Koryŏ

²⁴KRS 95:6a.

office in his lifetime. But his social status was sufficiently high for him to give his daughter in marriage to Kim Ŭn-bu who rose to be the Provincial Governor of Kongju sometime before the second Kitan invasion of 1010. It was through its relations with Kim Ŭn-bu's family that the Yi clan seems to have been admitted into the Koryŏ ruling circle. While serving as the Provincial Governor, Kim Ŭn-bu had the fortune of serving King Sun at Kongju as the chief local official when the king stopped there while fleeing from the invading Kitans and also on his way back to the capital after the Kitan armies had withdrawn from Korea in 1011. During the king's stop-over, Kim Ŭn-bu married his daughter to the king. Later he also gave his two other daughters to the king.

As the maternal family of these ladies, the family of Yi Hŏ-gyŏm seems to have been admitted to the ruling stratum in Koryŏ. Members of the Yi family began to appear in the Koryŏ officialdom from this time on and gradually they moved into the top ruling circle of the Koryŏ aristocracy. The first official sign of the Yi family's admission into membership of the Koryŏ ruling stratum appears immediately after Prince Hŭm, a son born to King Sun and one of Kim Ŭn-bu's daughters, became the Heir Apparent in 1024. When the prince became the Heir Apparent, his maternal grandmother received a formal title as the Grand Lady of Ansan-gun. Two years later Yi Hŏ-gyŏm himself received posthumously the honorary title of Marquis with a sigŭp of fifteen hundred households. In the same year, his grandson Cha-yŏn passed the civil service examination at the

age of 32 se and was given a minor appointment in the government. The stimulus for this sudden rise of the Yi family's political fortune was not only the family's relationship to the consort family of Kim Ūn-bu but also its own Silla aristocratic origins. Nevertheless, despite the family's inherent eligibility for government service, its relationship with the family of Kim Ūn-bu seems to have given the Yi clan a new status, which made its entrance to the exclusive ruling stratum of the Koryŏ aristocracy possible.

The official career of the Yi family in the Koryŏ government starts with Hŏ-gyŏm's two sons. One, named Han, became a councillor of state, while the other, Nul, rose to be the Superior General in the Koryŏ army. The family moved to the height of its power during the fifth generation after Hŏ-gyŏm. Its new status was carried on by Hŏ-gyŏm's grandson Cha-yŏn who entered the government service after his successful chinsa examination. He rose steadily in the officialdom during the reigns of King Hŭm (Tŏk-chong), King Hyŏng (Chŏng-jong), and King Hwi (Mun-jong), all of whom were Cha-yŏn's second cousins born to Hŏ-gyŏm's granddaughters; and he rose to the pinnacle of official hierarchy before his death in 1061. His brilliant career was in itself impressive enough, but the marriages of his three daughters to King Hwi gave him added prestige and influence which were unusual even in the oligarchical ruling circles. The esteem of the family rose further during the reigns of subsequent kings, all of whom had women of the Yi clan as their mothers.

The Yi clan remained as one of the most powerful aristocratic families in the Koryŏ ruling stratum for over a hundred years. Three points in the rise and fall of the Yi clan deserve our consideration: first, the Yi clan's share in the high echelons of the Koryŏ government during the century of its power and fame; second, the extent of the clan's marital relationships with other outstanding aristocratic families of the period; and finally, the dramatic failures of the Yi clan members in their attempt to make the government power their family monopoly.

A roster of officials from the Yi clan for the five generations after Hŏ-gyŏm is quite appalling with its impressive galaxy of high officials even though the list is far from complete because some members of the clan left no records of their official careers.²⁵ If we count the identifiable members alone, we note that the family produced nine queens, three Chancellors, fourteen councillors of state, one Royal Tudor, (the second highest title for the Buddhist priests) one Superior General, and one Grand General, all in a little over a hundred years. Starting with Yi Han's councillorship of state, Cha-yŏn, one of the two sons of Han, rose to the Chancellorship as mentioned already. One of Han's grandchildren became Chancellor, five became councillors of state, one a Royal Tudor, and three were queens, while the rest,

²⁵Parts of the material for the last two sections of this chapter are drawn from: Fujita, op. cit., pp. 376-429.

though their records are incomplete, reached positions of upper fifth grade or higher ranks. In the next generation we find three more queens, still another Chancellor, and four more councillors of state, with others reaching positions ranging from the rank of upper fifth to upper third grade. During this generation two of the clan members made their unsuccessful bid for the arrogation of the government power and lost their lives as well as the promising careers of many other members of the clan. Nevertheless, despite these severe blows to its political status, the clan managed to produce in the following generation three queens and three councillors of state while at least six others are known to have interrupted their promising careers because of their father's political debacle. The persistent strength of the Yi clan is seen even in the survival of the Yi clan from the bloody massacre of the aristocratic civil officials during the military coup d'etat of 1170 and in the subsequent rise of the clan members to positions of pre-eminence. Even after the military domination the clan posterity therefore made the name of the Yi clan reappear in the rosters of the high officials in Koryŏ.²⁶

The roster of the Yi clan members in the Koryŏ officialdom shows that the clan members' entrance into the government service was either through a successful civil service examination or by means of the "protective" appointment for the children of the high ranking officials. The former avenue

²⁶KRS 95:17 f; 102:10ab, 23a-29a.

seems to have provided a higher start for the members of the clan than the other, although the latter did not seem to hinder materially the degree of success in their official careers. The roster also shows that all the known members of Yi Han's branch of the clan entered the civil service while the two known members of the Yi Mul branch entered the military service. The members of both branches seem to have been assured of top positions in their respective services unless their careers were disrupted by unforeseen causes such as death or a power struggle. In fact, all top positions of authority, especially in the Department of Secretariat-Chancellery, the Department of Ministries, and the Supreme Security Council, were almost guaranteed to the members of the Yi Han branch, provided that they stayed in their service long enough to climb the ladder of hierarchy. Moreover, the appearance of their names in successive generations on the roster of high civil officials makes a sharp contrast to the abrupt silence on the Yi Mul branch after two generations. The silence of the latter branch on the official records should be construed as an indication of the inferiority of the military service to which it belonged.

We shall now proceed to examine the inter-locking marriage relationships established by the Yi clan with other powerful families in the Koryŏ ruling stratum. As we have already seen, the rise of the Yi clan in the Koryŏ ruling stratum started with its relationship with the consort family of Kim Ŭn-bu. We have noted that the Yi clan's Silla aristocratic origin

also gave the social qualifications for its admission into the inner circle of Koryŏ ruling aristocracy. That these two factors provided an opportunity for the Yi clan to break into the oligarchical Koryŏ ruling stratum is evident in the marriage of a daughter of Kim In-wi to Yi Cha-yŏn. Kim In-wi, a descendant of the Silla royal family, was then already in the oligarchical circle of the Koryŏ ruling class. His grandfather, In-yun, became a meritorious subject under Wang Kŏn because of his contribution to the founding of the Koryŏ Dynasty.²⁷ Later, In-wi gave one of his daughters in marriage to King Sun and a princess born to them eventually became the queen to King Hŭm. In-wi's own official career ended with the councillorship of state which he occupied at the time of his official retirement in 1021. As a bearer of the Silla royal Bone, the Kim clan of Kyŏngju must have had no difficulty qualifying socially for admission to the Koryŏ ruling circle. Yi Cha-yŏn's marriage to a woman of the Kim clan was then based on the aristocratic origin of Yi's family and the Yi clan's membership in the ruling stratum of Koryŏ. The marriages between the members of the two families continued from this time on, thus strengthening the political ties between the two clans. For instance, Cha-yŏn's grandson, Cha-wŏn, took as his wife the daughter of Chancellor Kim Kyŏng-yong who was In-wi's grandson, while the Executive of Chancellery, Kim In-gyu, son of Kyŏng-yong, gave his daughter

²⁷Fujita, op. cit., pp. 401-403.

in marriage to Yi Chi-ŏn, Cha-yŏn's great-grandson. The political tie between the two families is seen in the banishment of Executive of Chancellery Kim In-gyu, along with his daughter and his son-in-law, when Yi Chi-ŏn's father, Cha-gyŏm, was exiled in a political debacle in 1126 after his attempt to control the government power had backfired. (See p. 290.)

Once in the aristocratic ruling stratum, the Yi family rapidly extended its marriage relationship to other oligarchical families. Among these were at least three more branch families of the ex-Silla royal clan. The first was the Kim clan of Kwangyang which apparently branched off from the Silla royal house and settled in the Naju area.²⁸ It is not clear how the Kim clan got started in their service in Koryŏ. But as the two earliest known ancestors, Kim Kil and Kim Chun, had the high official titles of early Koryŏ and because Naju became Wang Kŏn's military base after his famous naval campaign of 909, there is a possibility of the clan's early association with the Koryŏ Dynasty. It is not until the generation of Kim Chun's grandson, Chŏng-jun, a contemporary of Yi Cha-yŏn, that we begin to have definite evidence of the clan membership in the Koryŏ ruling stratum. Although Kim Chun's son, Ch'aek, passed the civil service examination with a high mark in 964, our sources indicate no record of him after this. But his son, Chŏng-jun, climbed as high as the Executive of the

²⁸The identity of the Kim clan is found in the inscription on the tombstone of Kim Ūi-wŏn, a member of the clan, which has been introduced by Fujita Ryōsaku in "Chōsen Kinseki Sadan," Chōsengaku-Ronkō, pp. 89-145.

Secretariat-Chancellery and this record was improved by his son and grandson, Yang-gam and Yag-on, both of whom succeeded to the chancellorship. The Yi clan's relationship with the Kim clan was first established when one of Yi Cha-yŏn's sons married a daughter of Kim Ch'aek and after this members of the two clans continued to inter-marry. Our sources list at least three more marriages between them before the fortunes of the aristocratic civil officials suddenly changed by the military coup of 1170.

The second of the three ex-Silla royal branch families with which the Yi clan established a marriage relationship was the Kim clan of Kangnŭng. The Yi clan's first known contact with the Kim clan was the marriage of Kim In-jon to a granddaughter of Yi Cha-yŏn. Kim In-jon's son, Yŏng-sŏk, also married a woman of the Yi clan. The Kim clan was a reputable, scholarly family in the Koryŏ ruling stratum and it produced many high officials in Koryŏ. Kim Sang-gi, In-jon's father, led an excellent official career, which extended over the reigns of four Koryŏ kings from King Hwi to King Ong. In the end he rose to be the Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery. Kim In-jon himself did well in his official life by rising to the powerful office of Chancellor although his brilliant career was temporarily interrupted by self-imposed retirement during the heydays of his brother-in-law, Yi Chag-yŏm. He was especially noted for his brilliant literary skill which brought the praise of Liao scholar Meng Ch'u. His brother, Ko, and his three sons all made names for themselves by their

literary skills and they all became in time the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery.

Another famous literary family, and the last of the three ex-Silla royal Bone families with which the Yi clan entered into a marriage relationship, was the Pak clan of P'yŏngsan. Among the ancestors of the Pak clan was Pak Su-gyŏng, a famous general under Wang Kŏn, whom we discussed in Chapter IV. Pak Il-lyang, a great-great grandson of Su-gyŏng, was one of the best literary masters of the early Koryŏ period. His work, it is said, was eagerly sought even by the Sung Chinese. Il-lyang was the Junior Executive of the Department of Ministries and the Executive Assistant of the Secretariat-Chancellery at the time of his death in 1096. His eight sons all seem to have made names for themselves individually.²⁹ Three of them passed the civil service examination and held high government positions during their official careers. It was one of Pak Il-lyang's grandsons, Hyŏ-yŏm, who had established a relationship with the Yi clan through his marriage to one of Yi Cha-gyŏm's daughters. Pak Hyŏ-yŏm shared the fate of his father-in-law when the latter's political debacle came in 1126.

The Yi clan maintained a marital relationship with at least one more important aristocratic family of the time, the famous Ch'oe clan of Haeju. Yi Yŏ, a grandson of Yi Han, married the daughter of Chancellor Ch'oe Yu-sŏn, and the ill-fated Yi Cha-gyŏm, a grandson of Cha-yŏn, married one of

²⁹ Ibid., p. 412.

Chancellor Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi's daughters. On the other hand, Ch'oe Yu-sŏn's grandson, Yak, married one of Yi Cha-yŏn's great granddaughters. The political implication of these marriages is indicated by the fact that all three had at least once in their career fallen into official disgrace and were sent into exile or else were demoted from their important duties, but in all cases they were later relieved from their disgrace and were restored to important official assignments. Their recovery from the disgrace might have been due to the political influence of their own clan members who sought their relief, but we should also give allowance to the possibility that their recovery was due to the political structure of the Koryŏ oligarchical rule. In fact, the marriages among the aristocratic families often became the basis for their political cooperation in the government. The rise of the Yi clan is a good illustration of what a strong combine of aristocratic families based on marital relations could offer its members if they were bent to take every advantage of the combine. Three generations in the lineage of the Yi Cha-yŏn family concluded the marriage ties with three oligarchical families of the Koryŏ ruling class. Yi Cha-yŏn's wife was from the Kim clan of Kyŏngju; his son, Ho, married a woman of the Kim clan of Kwangyang; and Ho's son, Cha-gyŏm took a wife from the Ch'oe clan of Haeju. The combination of these four great families alone, even if we do not take into account their ties with the ruling house and with all of their collateral families, would have given the Yi clan formidable power and prestige.

It is no wonder that twice the clan members attempted to arrogate the government power to themselves, and that the destruction of their ambition and personal power machine became imperative if Koryŏ was to save the oligarchical structure of the government

From the above discussion of the Yi clan of Kyŏngwŏn, it is evident that the great families with which the Yi clan entered into marital relationships virtually included most of the ruling aristocratic families of the time.³¹ Such extensive inter-marriage with the powerful families was by no means limited to the Yi clan of Kyŏngwŏn. In fact, extensive inter-marriage was prevalent among all the ruling aristocratic families of the time.³² Inbreeding among the great families, which was reminiscent of the Silla practice of endogamy, actually made all oligarchical families of the time somehow related to one another. It is remarkable that in spite of such extensive inbreeding among themselves, they all kept a high degree of self-identity as independent clans. This might have been due to their strict following of the lineage of their family tree. In any case, the inbreeding helped considerably in the perpetuation of the oligarchical rule in early Koryŏ.

³¹In the above discussion we have not included those families with which the Yi clan had indirect relationships through its collateral families. A conspicuous example of this kind is the family of Kim Kun, another branch of the Kyŏngju Kim clan, whose children flourished in Koryŏ particularly after the debacle of Yi Cha-gyŏm in 1126.

³²Fujita, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-413.

Relatively speaking, there were very few instances of a power struggle among the aristocratic families of the ruling stratum. Considering the predominant political orientation of these families and the extent of power vested in them as the ruling aristocracy of the dynasty, the remarkable absence of strong factionalism in the early Koryŏ political scene is really surprising. A few known cases of power struggles such as So T'ae-bo vs. Yi Cha-ŭi or Yi Cha-gyŏm vs. Han An-in, as we shall see presently, had too many other connotations in them to be termed as pure factionalism. Moreover, they invariably ended in catastrophes, especially for the seeming winners. Pressure to maintain political equilibrium among the oligarchical families seems to have been always too great for any single family or a factional group to turn the direction of political wind against the oligarchical rule. As long as the great aristocratic civil officials remained in power, the Koryŏ constitution obviously demanded an oligarchical power configuration among the ruling stratum.

The Trials of the Oligarchical Rule

We shall now examine two cases in which members of the Yi clan unsuccessfully tried to upset the political equilibrium in the ruling stratum. The first of these cases is known as "The Yi Cha-ŭi's Conspiracy" in the Korean history. It refers to the power struggle between Yi Cha-ŭi and his chief rival, So T'ae-bo, which culminated in the murder of Yi Cha-ŭi and his followers in 1095. The violent bloodshed

which occurred suddenly on a summer day of 1095 in the middle of the palace was actually in the making for several years. The seeds of the power struggle were already sown during the reign of King Un (Sŏn-jong, 1083-1094) when the king was closely courted in his latter years by Yi Cha-ŭi, his maternal cousin and brother-in-law. Yi Cha-ŭi, having become the Minister of Revenue (Hobu-sangsŏ) in 1092, was then a high ranking official. In his rise to the position of influence, he might have been assisted by at least two high ranking officials of the time, Chancellor Yi Chŏng-gong and the Executive of Chancellery, Kim Yang-gam. The basis of such speculation is, first of all, the sudden disappearance of these two high officials from the active political scene after the debacle of Yi Cha-ŭi; secondly, the families of both men were related to Yi Cha-ŭi. In case of Yi Chŏng-gong, there was an indirect relationship with Yi Cha-ŭi. Yi Cha-ŭi's cousin and Yi Chŏng-gong's son both married daughters of Kim Kyŏng-yong, whose family, as indicated earlier, maintained a complex marital relationship with the Yi clan of Kyŏngwon. In the case of Kim Yang-gam, the relationship was more direct. Yang-gam's son, Ŭi-wŏn, took both his first and second wives from the Yi clan. One of them was the niece and the other the aunt of Yi Cha-ŭi. Thirdly, there is Kim Yang-gam's personal association with one of Yi Cha-ŭi's supporters, Yi Kyŏng-p'il. Kim Yang-gam was once much criticized for using his influence to help Yi Kyŏng-p'il pass the civil service examination in 1090, and five years later Yi Kyŏng-

p'il, still a minor official, vanished along with fifty-odd members of Yi Cha-ŭi's faction following the fall of their leader.

The real basis of Yi Cha-ŭi's power actually was his own position as the head of the most powerful consort family of the royal house at the time after his brother Cha-in's death in 1091. The reigning monarch was completely surrounded by women of the Yi clan. In addition to the queen-mother, the monarch's three wives were all from the Yi clan. His first two wives were the daughters of Yi Cha-ŭi's cousins, and his last wife was Cha-ŭi's sister. What this meant in terms of Cha-ŭi's influence in the court is indicated by an episode concerning Yi Cha-wi (his relation to Yi Cha-ŭi or the Yi clan of Kyōngwŏn is unknown), who was the highest ranking official among the active Yi Cha-ŭi supporters. Yi Cha-wi was once dismissed from his position as a councillor of state on account of his oversight in using the Kitan year title on a state paper that he sent to the Sung court. This mistake incurred the Sung emperor's anger and his rejection of the Koryŏ letter; it also caused Yi Cha-wi to lose his position. A few months later, however Yi Cha-wi was restored to his official position as a councillor of state through the influence of the court. Although our source says nothing about the direct role of Yi Cha-ŭi in effecting the official restoration of his important supporter to the government, it is quite evident that the stimulus behind the court was Yi Cha-ŭi himself. This is suggested in the Koryŏsa when it

says that the reappointment of Yi Cha-wi met the criticism of the official circle because of the court influence on his reappointment.³³

The actual arrogation of power by Yi Cha-ŭi, however, did not take place until King Un died in 1094 leaving behind him a juvenile son to succeed him to the throne. The new King Uk (Hŏn-jong) was only eleven se and the queen-mother acted as regent. Thus, the new king was also safely in the hands of the consort family. The attitude of Cha-ŭi's political opponents at this crucial juncture is unknown. But the two adversaries apparently established an equal footing in the new government formed after the inauguration. The powerful office of Chancellor was left unfilled in the new government, and So T'ae-bo, the chief rival of Yi Cha-ŭi, filled the position of the Executive of Chancellery along side of Cha-wi, the chief supporter of Yi Cha-ŭi in the government. Yi Cha-ŭi himself became the Administrator of the Supreme Security Council.

Although much of what went on behind the scenes between the two factions is unknown to us, one of the major points of contention seems to have been over the control of the military forces. This is indicated in the appointments of both Yi Cha-ŭi and Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi to the important Supreme Security Council. Yi Cha-ŭi occupied the position of its Administrator, as mentioned above, but its Co-Administrator

³³KRS 10:28b.

position went to Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi who apparently did not side with Yi Cha-ŭi's group. A more significant and startling appointment, however, came six months later when Superior General Wang Kuk-mo, a successful military official and So T'ae-bo's right-hand man, received an unprecedented appointment as Provisional Administrator of the Ministry of Military Affairs (Kwŏn Sangsŏ-byŏngbusa). The selection of a military official to such an important position was clearly against the established rules geared to protect the principle of the civil supremacy in Koryŏ and it indicates the unusual nature of the contention between the two rivals over the control of military forces. Wang Kuk-mo's unusual appointment was a clear-cut victory for So T'ae-bo in winning the support of the army in this tight contest. It also indicates the crucial move by So T'ae-bo to rally the military support behind him so as to encounter the real and potential threats to his position. Unfortunately the family background of So T'ae-bo is unknown. But since So was a rare surname, and because we see no trace of So T'ae-bo's family flourishing after him, we may assume that his social origin was non-aristocratic or his status, at least, was low in the ruling stratum. It is quite possible that his non-aristocratic social origins might have helped him win the support of the military officials. In any case, when he won his victory over the Yi Cha-ŭi group, he emerged as the promoter of the military interests and his support of these alarmed the aristocratic oligarchy of a dangerous trend toward the military control of the govern-

ment.³⁴

Meanwhile, Yi Cha-^ui was taking counter measures to strengthen his position by gathering a band of armed men and training them as his personal soldiers. He also took steps to improve his control of the military authority by assuming for himself the position of Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council. He gained some support from the military officers, as indicated by the existence of at least four Generals and many other lower ranking officers among his supporters. It is significant, however, that the Superior or Grand General, the ranks for the commander and deputy commander of the eight units of the central army, were absent from his followers. This absence of high ranking officers contrasts to the existence of such officers among the followers of So T'ae-bo. In fact, it was Superior General Wang Kuk-mo who, under the direction of So T'ae-bo, later led a raid on the Yi Cha-^ui group. This suggests that many high military commanders, at least in the capital, had joined So T'ae-bo's side or else had avoided becoming involved in the dispute.

The climax of the power struggle between the rivaling groups erupted suddenly in the summer of 1095 when So T'ae-bo struck his opponents in a lightning raid and killed Yi Cha-^ui and his hard-core followers, later purging the rest out of the government. The military force for this raid was mobilized by Wang Kuk-mo, but So T'ae-bo was the master mind of the plan.

³⁴KRS 95:26b.

So T'ae-bo decided to strike against his opponents when Yi Cha-ŭi was in attendance at court. A small band of armed men led by a junior officer, Ko Ŭi-hwa, was sent to kill Yi Cha-ŭi in the palace, and then So T'ae-bo released the pre-fabricated news of an alleged imminent revolt by Yi Cha-ŭi. At the same time, he rushed upon Wang Kuk-mo and his troops to seize the palace and to round up all of Yi Cha-ŭi's supporters. Among those who died on the spot were Yi Cha-ŭi, his two sons (one still a minor official and the other a priest), and seventeen military and civil officials of the Yi Cha-ŭi faction. The other supporters, fifty-odd in total, including Executive of Chancellery Yi Cha-wi, were sent into political exile while many of their wives and children were made slaves and were attached to the northern frontier garrisons.

The complete, ruthless destruction of his opponents by the victorious So T'ae-bo speaks of the seriousness of the contention between the two rivals. Yet one is amazed by the lack of any noticeable armed resistance on the part of Yi Cha-ŭi and his followers when they met destruction at the hands of the armed opponents. The possession of considerable armed forces by Yi Cha-ŭi makes it rather difficult to understand the reasons for their submission without a fight unless the men were unmatched by an overwhelmingly superior force. Evidently their opponents did mobilize a formidable force through Wang Kuk-mo who held an unusually high position as a military officer. This is a very significant point in understanding the pro-military orientation which So T'ae-bo took

after his victory over Yi Cha-ŭi. It clearly shows that the alliance between So T'ae-bo and Wang Kuk-mo gave the anti-Yi Cha-ŭi group a new twist and forced it to represent the military interest.

The question remains, then: How did So T'ae-bo amass such a formidable force in his hands under the Koryŏ oligarchical rule? Actually it was made possible for So T'ae-bo only after he received the tacit acquiescence on his plan from other high officials who shared the view that Yi Cha-ŭi's arrogation of government power constituted a really serious threat to the political equilibrium of the oligarchical aristocracy. In the beginning the high officials did not seem to be aware of the full implications of the acts of their accomplices in this power struggle. Probably they did not know the full intentions of the So T'ae-bo group until it had eliminated all of its opponents from the government. In their wish to check the advent of Yi Cha-ŭi, they overlooked the potential danger that the So-Wang alliance would pose against the oligarchical rule. But later when they found out that So T'ae-bo and his military stooges were as much, if not more, of a threat to them as Yi Cha-ŭi ever was, they withdrew their support from the So T'ae-bo group and sought to reduce its growing strength to its original size. The course of subsequent development after devastating Yi Cha-ŭi's debacle tells us the decisive role played by a few aristocratic civil officials to check the growing influence of the military interest in the government.

Meanwhile, the power vacuum left by eliminating Yi Cha-ŭi and his group from the government was immediately filled by the victorious So-Wang faction. So T'ae-bo assumed the position of Provisional Superintendent of the Ministry of Civil Personnel while Wang Kuk-mo took the position of Provisional Superintendent of the Ministry of Military Affairs, both then exercising final control over the appointment of civil and military personnel. About a month after their victory, they made their power formal by eliminating the prefix "Provisional" from their official titles, and Wang Kuk-mo was then made a presidium member of the Privy Council. As they strengthened their positions, they also delegated to their accomplices more authority in the government. Two months later, they forced King Uk to abdicate the throne in favor of his oldest surviving uncle, Duke Hŭi (who later changed his name to Ong). The choice of Ong was made apparently on the basis of his political association with So T'ae-bo. With his inauguration, a new administration headed by So T'ae-bo was formed, but it also included several high officials outside of the So T'ae-bo group who had previously given their tacit support for the elimination of Yi Cha-ŭi to So T'ae-bo. The new line-up in the government was: So T'ae-bo, the Chancellor; Kim Sang-gi, the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery; Im Kae, the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery and Superintendent of the Ministry of Justice; Son Kwan, the Executive of the Ministries, the Assistant Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery, and the Superintendent of the

Ministry of Revenue; Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi the Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council and the Head Hanlin Academician; and Kim Sŏn-sŏk, the Administrator of the Supreme Security Council. Also included in the high echelon of the new government was Wang Kuk-mo, who was by now failing in his health, and many other high military officials.³⁵

Even though the new government included many who took a neutral position during the power struggle (such as Kim Sang-gi, Im Kae, Son Kwan, Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi, Kim Sŏn-sŏk, and Yu Sop), the real authority was still retained by So T'ae-bo and Wang Kuk-mo, both of whom came out openly as supporters of the military interests. Especially Wang Kuk-mo, with his powerful military authority, seems to have relentlessly sought the promotion of the military interests.³⁶ The effect of his relentless endeavors was reflected in the unusual appointments of many military officials to high civil positions in the government, especially in the Ministries of Military Affairs, Public Works, Justice, and Revenue at this time. It is interesting to note that the So-Wang coalition, though basically representing the military interests, also promoted many other social underdogs of Koryŏ society in the government. Among those who received "prominent official appointments were . . . artisans, merchants and lowborn underlings."³⁷ These appoint-

³⁵KRS 11:3ab, 5b, 31b.

³⁶KRS 95:26b.

³⁷KRS 11:3b.

ments were obviously made in a flagrant violation of the established rules of official selection in Koryŏ and they were carried out in defiance of the sacred privileges of the ruling aristocracy.

The upsurge of the military officials in the government, however, did not last long. The advent of the military interests which emerged out of the So-Wang victory seems to have lacked a basis on which to grow as a political force so as to overtake the reign of government from the civilian oligarchical aristocracy. The military officials simply were not equipped with the means necessary to compete with the firmly established civil ruling aristocracy. Their failure to maintain the hard-won position and power in the government was manifested in the steady increase (particularly after the death of Wang Kuk-mo in 1096) in the number of old stock civil officials of aristocratic background in the high echelons of the government. In a desperate attempt to stop their continuous loss of ground, the aging Chancellor So T'ae-bo (just before his official retirement in 1102) even agitated the abolition of the state university, the training center of the aristocratic leaders, but his struggle was to no avail.³⁸ The old Chancellor himself could not prevent the inevitable.

The loss of ground by the So-Wang group in the government was so rapid that within a little over five years after their disastrous defeat some of the purged members of the

³⁸KRS 95:25b.

Yi Cha-ŭi group were given a special royal pardon for their "crimes" and they were recalled to the capital to receive new official appointments.³⁹ The retirement of So T'ae-bo in 1102 occasioned the reassertion of the aristocratic control of the government. The reality of their power was subsequently manifested in the banishment of several unbending military officials of high rank. Significantly, the master mind of this purge was Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi, a grandson of Ch'oe Ch'ung and the father-in-law of Yi Cha-gyŏm. Following this successful suppression of the unruly military officials, he was appointed to the Chancellor.⁴⁰

The disappearance of the So-Wang group also enhanced the resurgence of the Yi clan to its old position of power in the government. The resurgence apparently took place very quickly because some members of the clan, especially the descendants of the Yi Cha-sang line, suffered little from the effects of the Yi Cha-ŭi debacle in their official careers. Yi Yŏ and Yi O, Cha-sang's two sons, for example, continued to hold high positions even after the debacle took place, and when Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi became the Chancellor in 1102, Yi O received an appointment as the Executive of Secretariat. Conspicuous among the fast rising officials were Yun Kwan, Kim Kyŏng-yong, and Wang Ka who were all related to the Yi clan.⁴¹ Under the

³⁹KRS 11:26ab.

⁴⁰KRS 96:1b.

⁴¹Fujita, op. cit., p. 422.

circumstances, it would be strange if Yi Cha-yŏn's descendants did not reappear on the political scene under the tight Koryŏ oligarchical rule. This time the one destined to rise as a new political power was Yi Cha-gyŏm, a cousin of Yi Cha-ŭi. Although he had once fallen into disgrace on account of an illicit relation committed by his sister, Queen Chang-gyŏng (the widow of King Hun), Cha-gyŏm was in a fitting position to benefit from the influences of his clan and the clan's collateral families. Cha-gyŏm was not only the son-in-law of Chancellor Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi but also a nephew of ex-Chancellor Kim Yang-gam. In addition, several members of his own clan held important positions in the government.⁴² Cha-gyŏm's prominence in the officialdom, however, did not occur until after King U (Ye-jong), the eldest son of King Ong, had succeeded his father to the throne. During the new king's reign, Cha-gyŏm again brought back all the power of the Yi clan which was previously enjoyed by his cousin, Cha-ŭi.

The rise of Yi Cha-gyŏm to a dominant position in the government followed much the same pattern as the case of Yi Cha-ŭi. But once he got to the position of power, as the contemporary Chinese observer, Hsü Ching, has pointed out, Cha-gyŏm took every precaution to avoid the disastrous path his cousin had taken before him.⁴³

⁴²For example, Yi O, a cousin of Yi Cha-gyŏm's father, was the Executive Assistant of the Chancellery and Kim Kyŏng-yong, a nephew of Cha-gyŏm's grandmother and father-in-law of Cha-gyŏm's brother, was the Superintendent of the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Administrator of the Supreme Security Council at the time. KRS 11:32.

⁴³Hsü Ching, Hsüan-ho Feng-shih Kao-li T'u-ching, Imanish Ryū (ed.) (Rev. ed.: Keijo, 1932), Chapter VIII, p. 43.

Yi Cha-gyŏm entered the government service through the "protective" system. After the interruption of his career on account of his sister's misconduct, he reappeared in the government as the Probationary Executive Censor (Si Ōsa-jung-sŭng) in 1106. Two years later he became the father-in-law of King U. Thereafter, he rose rapidly in the government and in 1114 he became the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery. When King U died in 1122, Cha-gyŏm had enough influence in the government to permit his grandson, the young Crown Prince Hae, to succeed the throne. In so doing, he had to block the late king's ambitious brothers, who also had their eyes on the throne, and he was obliged to send two of them in to exile following Hae's coronation. Cha-gyŏm's action obviously stirred up suspicion in the official circle concerning his political motives. The suspicion was deepened when he started to strengthen his position in the government by placing his supporters in the key official positions and by aligning the support of military officials.

To build up the military support, Cha-gyŏm purposely chose a man of undistinguished social background, Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng. Ch'ŏk was an illiterate military genius from an obscure low official family who succeeded in making a name for himself purely on the basis of his splendid military record. Cha-gyŏm carefully cultivated a personal relationship with Ch'ŏk and he promoted Ch'ŏk and members of Ch'ŏk's family, including a brother Ch'ŏk Chun-sin, to relatively important positions in the government. The bond between Yi Cha-gyŏm and Ch'ŏk Chun-

gyōng was later strengthened by the marriage of Cha-gyōm's son, Chi-wōn, to Ch'ōk's daughter. Obviously this was a calculated move by Cha-gyōm to insure the unquenchable loyalty of Ch'ōk and at the same time probably to win other military officials to his side. Through Ch'ōk Chun-gyōng, Cha-gyōm apparently gained considerable support and effective influence over the military officials. Using his power and influence, he started to eliminate systematically his chief political rivals with an unsparing and swift stroke. In 1122 he master-minded the execution of his chief rival, Executive of Chancellery Han An-in, plus Han's son-in-law; he also brought about the mass arrest and exile of Han's followers and others who stood on his way to power, all numbering several hundred.⁴⁴

This large scale purge of his opponents was followed by another undertaking in early 1124 against Ch'oe Hong-jae and Ch'oe's military associates and close relatives. Prior to his fall, Ch'oe Hong-jae worked for Cha-gyōm as one of the principal instigators in the purge of Han An-in and his followers. Following the purge, he was appointed to Superintendent of the Supreme Security Council, and just before his own exile, he received the position of Executive of the Chancellery. Surprisingly, however, Yi Cha-gyōm is said to have sought Ch'ōk Chun-gyōng's opinion of Ch'oe's political dependability before Cha-gyōm gave his order to strike against

⁴⁴XRS 97:13b-16a.

Ch'oe.⁴⁵ What this probably means is that Ch'oe showed a sign of defection from the Cha-gyōm's camp. The reason for his defection is unknown, but it could well have been Cha-gyōm's arbitrary and excessive arrogation of power. Cha-gyōm obviously wanted to leave no one standing between him and the young king to challenge his power in the government. Following this second purge, he married one of his daughters to the young king, who was also the girl's nephew. Cha-gyōm, however, seems to have had no particular desire to seek the Crown for himself. Actually he did not need to usurp the throne as long as he had control of the government. In fact, during the subsequent century of military dictatorship in Koryō, the military strongman never deemed it necessary to take over the Crown by himself. He was able to exercise all the authority of the Crown without changing the dynasty or the monarchical system. For the same reason Yi Cha-gyōm also must have deemed it unnecessary to usurp the throne. Such an action would unwittingly incite popular resentment and a strong reaction from the official circle while, at the same time, it could materially contribute toward no political end.

The reaction against Cha-gyōm's high-handedness was nevertheless in the making. It brewed among young court attendants. Two of them, Kim Ch'an and An Po-rin, eventually persuaded King Hae (In-jong) to plan a forceful ousting of Yi Cha-gyōm from his position of paramount influence in

⁴⁵Kim Chong-sō and others, op. cit., 9:5a.

the government. While the king agreed with them, nevertheless he sent them to seek the advices of two aristocratic elder statesmen, Executive of Chancellery Yi Kong-su and ex-Executive of Chancellery Kim In-jon, both of whom stood outside of Cha-gyŏm's influence, though they were related to Cha-gyŏm's family. The two elder statesmen apparently sympathized with the schemers, but advised against any rash action at that time. The young schemers, however, went ahead with their plan and enrolled the aid of Co-Administrator of the Supreme Security Council, Chi Mog-yŏn, in the execution of their plan. With the help of Chi, they obtained the collaboration of a few military officers who were at odds with Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng and together they ironed out their plan to overthrow Yi Cha-gyŏm by force. The main strength of this fearless group consisted of soldiers under the command of Superior General Ch'oe T'aek and O T'aek, Grand General Kwŏn Su, and General Ko Sŏk. In addition, they had the support of a few civil officials as well as at least twenty-five young court attendants.

Against the more realistic advice of the two elder statesmen, Yi Kong-su and Kim In-jon, this valient group struck against the powerful Yi Cha-gyŏm group one night in 1126. Their plan apparently was to hit the force guarding the palace first so as to secure the custody of the king and then to release their full strength on the major targets of the Yi Cha-gyŏm force. They moved swiftly to seize the control of the palace and they killed several of the Yi Cha-gyŏm supporters, including the Minister of Military Affairs, Ch'ŏk

Chun-sin, and Court Attendant Ch'ŏk Sun, brother and son of Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng. But they could not extend their control beyond the palace ground. Before they could make any further move, they were completely besieged by Yi Cha-gyŏm forces. The forces mobilized by Cha-gyŏm at this time apparently included a main portion of the army unit in the capital led by Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng and also a group of over three hundred armed monks led by Cha-gyŏm's son, Priest Ŭi-ŭang, from the nearby Hyŏnhwa Temple. Much of the capital, including the vital government arsenal, was still in the hands of the Yi Cha-gyŏm group. The high officials, who met at Yi Cha-gyŏm's residence on the night of the insurrection to discuss the counter measure against the insurgents, could not agree on a definite measure. Without waiting for the formal decision of the officials, Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng surrounded the palace, sealing off the insurgents in it. Both sides vacillated to force through the palace gate and a temporary stalemate ensued the following day. During the stalemate the young king personally appealed for an immediate end of the siege and for disbanding the Yi Cha-gyŏm forces, but his appeal only met a counter-demand from Cha-gyŏm to turn the principal conspirators over to him. As night fell on the capital, Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng contemplated setting the palace on fire in order to force the insurgents to surrender. He carried this out before he had cleared it with Yi Cha-gyŏm who was then consulting with Executive of Chancellery Yi Kong-su about Ch'ŏk's impending action.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Under the advice of Executive of Secretariat-Chan-

The young king, fleeing from the blazing palace even announced his willingness to abdicate in favor of Yi Cha-gyŏm, if the latter so wished. But Cha-gyŏm is said to have turned it down under the advice of Executive of Chancellery Yi Kong-su. Cha-gyom's temptation to accept the young king's offer was said to have been curbed by his fear of criticism from the Secretariat-Chancellery and the Supreme Security Council.⁴⁷ By the next morning most of the palace buildings had fallen to the ground and so, too, did the hopes of the valiant insurgents who tried to oust Yi Cha-gyŏm and his group from power. The principal conspirators and their followers all perished with their cause, leaving only a few to escape from the terror of reprisal. The number of victims, it is said, was countless and many among them were high ranking military officials.

At the same time, the insurrection did not leave the Yi Cha-gyŏm group without its share of the effect. The bloody insurrection left behind it the repercussions on the deliberate destruction of the palace by the Yi Cha-gyŏm force. Official pressure mounted on the leaders of the Yi Cha-gyŏm force to justify their action. The insurrection had been put down, but because of this pressure, an estranged relationship began to develop between Yi Cha-gyŏm and Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng. Each tried to find a scapegoat in the other for the destruction

cellery Yi Kong-su, Yi Cha-gyŏm is said to have sent his disapproval to Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng to set the palace afire.
KRS 127:17a.

⁴⁷KRS 127:17b.

of the palace and the act of violence on the sacred grounds of the palace. Each shifted on the other the final responsibility. It is significant that the existence of such pressure compelled Yi Cha-gyŏm and Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng to find a scapegoat for their action. The source of such pressure came from influential aristocratic officials who nominally stood outside of the quarrel, but now exerted effective pressure using their influence as the members of the oligarchical ruling stratum. The existence of such pressure and the acquiescence of it by the two supposedly all-powerful men manifest the limitation imposed on the power of any single official in Koryŏ under the oligarchical structure. The mechanism of oligarchical rule, even in such extraordinary circumstances, could yield sufficient power to press on the all-powerful Yi Cha-gyŏm to acquiesce to the demand of the collective leadership of the aristocratic civil officials. Yi Cha-gyŏm's refusal to succumb to this demand and the subsequent counter maneuvers by the oligarchical leaders finally brought an end to his political career.

But for a while the successful suppression of the insurrection of 1126 was ensued by further control of the government by the Yi Cha-gyŏm group. At first glance, the group appears to have nearly completed its control of the government. Yi Cha-gyŏm himself retained the unprecedented position as the Chief-Minister-Extraordinary in charge of the three Departments (Chungsŏ-ryŏng, Yŏng Munha-Gangsŏ-dosŏngsa) the Superintendent of the Ministry of Civil Personnel and the

Resident-General of the Western Capital (Sōgyōng-yususa) in addition to being a meritorious subject and the Duke of Chosōnguk. With such unusually impressive titles, he set up his own power house staffed by his personal followers. His new office was obviously to function as a government within the government. Ch'ōk Chun-gyōng was charged with the command of the armed forces as the Superintendent of the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Executive of Secretariat-Chancellery. Yi Kong-su was retained in his earlier position as the executive of Secretariat-Chancellery and the Superintendent of the Ministry of Rites. Yi Cha-dōk, Cha-gyōm's cousin; Hō Chae, a non-aristocratic protege; and Kim Pu-il, a member of the Kyōngju Kim clan, became Executive Assistants of Secretariat-Chancellery. Yi Chi-mi, Cha-gyōm's son, was appointed as the Superintendent of the Supreme Security Council while both Kim Ŭi-wōn, the son-in-law of the late Yi Cha-in, and Kim Hyang, father-in-law of Yi Cha-gyōm's son, Chi-bo, received the positions of Co-Administrator of the Supreme Security Council (Tongji-chungch'u-wonsa). Kim Pu-sik, Pu-il's brother, was appointed as the Chief Censor and the Deputy Commissioner of the Supreme Security Council. In addition, the king was compelled to take in marriage Cha-gyōm's youngest daughter and also to reside in Cha-gyōm's own residence while the palace was rebuilt. In order to safeguard a ready access to weapons for his own soldiers, Cha-gyōm transferred some arms from the government arsenal to his residence. These arbitrary actions demonstrate Cha-gyōm's dictation of

the government following his successful suppression of the insurrection of 1126.

Yet, with all these enormous powers at his disposal, still he failed to subjugate completely the independent minded aristocratic officials under his authority. Sharing honor and pride as a member of the ruling stratum, aristocratic high officials (like Yi Kong-su, his son Chi-jo, Kim In-jon, Kim Pu-sik, and his brother Pu-il) would not let the abnormal situation of the monopoly and the arbitrary use of power by Yi Cha-gyŏm continue unobstructed. Even during the insurrection of 1126, Yi Kong-su acted as an important moderator of Yi Cha-gyŏm using his influence as powerful councillor of state and Cha-gyŏm's close relative. Yi Kong-su personally saw what the arrogation of power by one man could do to the officials of his status. He witnessed Cha-gyŏm removing his rivals from the government through the use of force. He also saw his own son, Chi-jo, demoted to a provincial position as a result of Chi-jo's incessant criticism of Yi Cha-gyŏm. While there were also others like Kim In-jon, who avoided a direct confrontation with Cha-gyŏm by voluntary retirement, many remained in their official positions to check whenever possible Cha-gyŏm's unconstitutional use of power.⁴⁸ When Yi Cha-gyŏm became really arrogant following his suppression of the insurrection, these aristocratic officials began to plot an overthrow. Their tactics were to ferment disunity

⁴⁸Kim Pu-sik was a good example of the latter group.
KRS 98:1a-3a.

among the leaders of the Yi Cha-gyŏm camp and then to use the discord against him. By these means, they succeeded in outwitting Cha-gyŏm, turning his right-hand men, Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng and Kim Hyang, against him.

Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng and Kim Hyang both had obscure and definitely non-aristocratic backgrounds, and they were both semi-illiterate upstarts who rose mainly under the patronage of Cha-gyŏm. Because of their low origin they apparently felt increasingly insecure as they rose to the height of their careers and found themselves among the ranks of the cultured aristocracy. They were complete strangers in the cultured ruling stratum. Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng particularly seems to have suffered from this sense of insecurity. His belief that Cha-gyŏm had insinuated him for the ultimate responsibility of the violence on the sacred palace ground made him feel that his position of power at best was temporary because of Cha-gyŏm's betrayal and he also felt he would be removed from his temporary position of power as soon as his usefulness was exhausted. This uneasy feeling was soon turned into ugly resentment against the man who brought him to that exclusive place of the oligarchical leadership. In this there is no doubt that he found ample encouragement from the new schemers against Yi Cha-gyŏm.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Since Kim Pu-il was sent by King Hae to see Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng when Ch'ŏk had split with Yi Cha-gyŏm, since Yi Kong-su was at the side of Ch'ŏk when Ch'ŏk carried out his vengeful action against Yi Cha-gyŏm, and because the two men consulted on Yi Cha-gyŏm's arrest, it is quite evident who was behind Ch'ŏk's action. KRS 127:21a, 22ab.

Only three months after he triumphantly suppressed the insurrection of 1126, Yi Cha-gyŏm, his family and his political followers, were rounded up by the soldiers of Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng, Kim Hyang and other royal officials, and they were sent into political exile en masse on the charge of treason against the ruling dynasty. Oddly enough, this was soon followed by the exile of Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng and his followers. Though they had collaborated with the new schemers, Ch'ŏk was the next target on the black list of the aristocratic leaders who had just used him in eliminating the Yi Cha-gyŏm group. Once Ch'ŏk had used up his usefulness for the oligarchical leaders, he had to go should the oligarchical restoration be completed in Koryŏ. Having restored their control of the government, the aristocratic civil officials who had resisted Yi Cha-gyŏm's arrogation of power had no use for the man who was once the instrument of that arrogation.

Thus the Koryŏ oligarchical rule survived two severe trials in the period of the political domination of the Yi clan. It should be noted here that the subsequent government under the aristocratic leadership of Kim In-jon, Yi Kong-su, Kim Pu-sik, and Kim Pu-il worked for the complete restoration of the oligarchical rule and the civil supremacy as they had existed before the advent of the Yi Cha-ŭi and Yi Cha-gyŏm. But the Koryŏ government after the advent of these two men was never really the same as it was earlier. One of the stunting and persistent obstacles against complete restoration was the new political consciousness of military officials who, during the

period of the crucial tests, had already learned the real strength of their power as the commanders of the armed forces. Their decisive role in effecting the control of the government opened their eyes to the myth of civil supremacy in Koryŏ. The seemingly invincible aristocratic civil officials and their domination of the government became no longer so invincible. After this period, the military officials showed no willingness to support the principle of civil supremacy and the aristocratic monopoly of power in Koryŏ. It was inevitable, then, that the political consciousness of the military officials would reach the point whereby they could take over the government so as to insure their own self-interests.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The spectacular resurgence of the ex-Silla aristocrats in the early Koryŏ ruling stratum makes it quite clear that the Koryŏ aristocracy was basically a continuity of the Silla aristocracy. The Koryŏ aristocracy though, was by no means a mere replica of the Silla aristocracy. For one thing, the new ruling stratum had a broader social basis than the old. The Sillan royal Bone which monopolized the old ruling stratum lost its monopolistic control under the new dynasty and its members now shared their power with others, especially with the members of ex-Sillan nobles of yuktup'um ranks who had become prominent in the new dynasty.¹ The members of ex-Silla royal Bone ranks, however, entered the new ruling stratum on the basis of their ex-socio-political strength alone, while the members of the non-royal Bone ranks were admitted into the stratum on the basis of their proven skill or worthy contributions to the new dynasty in addition to their Sillan Bone ranks. The important group among the latter were Confucian orientated members of the Silla nobles who were basically dissatisfied with the rigidity of the Silla kolp'um system, and who deserted their ranks to work for the new dynasty with the hope of building a new political order

¹The Ch'oe clan of Kyŏngju which formerly belonged to the Sillan Yuktup'um is a good example. It is also quite probable that many ex-Silla noble families of non-royal Bone status, such as Yi, Son, and Chŏng, contributed their shares to the new ruling stratum in Koryŏ.

in Korea. They drew their inspiration for change and reform essentially from the ideology and institutions of medieval China which they had studied either in China or in Korea. The years of study of Confucian philosophy or the actual political experience they gained in China convinced them of the obvious advantages in adopting the sophisticated Chinese government system in Korea. The widespread disorder and the rampant civil strife among the decadent nobles of Silla spurred them to abandon their faith in the Sillan institutions. And the political and social disintegration in Silla strengthened their conviction for the urgent need of political reform in Korea. But when their attempts to reform the Sillan government failed, their hope to save the old kingdom also left them. Their passion to transplant the Chinese institutions in Korea thus carried them to the new dynasty.

The Silla aristocrats who gathered around Wang Kŏn eventually made two significant contributions to the Koryŏ Kingdom. First, they convinced the Koryŏ founder to accept Confucianism as the ideology of the new dynasty; secondly, they became instrumental in facilitating the voluntary surrender of the Silla Kingdom to Koryŏ. The first of these provided the basis for Koryŏ to accept the Confucian ethics and morality and also the nomenclature and general structure of the Chinese government system, while the second paved the way for Koryŏ to preserve the Silla social order with minimum change. The introduction of the Chinese civil service examination system in 958 added to the fulfillment of the Confucian state in Korea. After this, Koryŏ gradually built her government in close imitation of the T'ang

and Sung government systems until she completed the work in the early eleventh century.

The resulting government was Chinese in name and form, though it was Korean in content and operation. As a government built and staffed largely by the Koreans of Silla aristocratic background, the Koryŏ government retained many salient features of the Silla political tradition. Koryŏ therefore inherited the essential Sillan government practice. The oligarchical rule which had its roots in the Silla tribal society seems to have been best suited to the conditions of Korea. It embodied the tradition of collective leadership of the Sillan ruling stratum. The balance of power and unity of purpose, which were the hallmarks of the Silla oligarchical leadership in its best tradition and which found their expressions in the Hwabaek Council in the Silla time, had their newly institutionalized expression in the Privy Council of Koryŏ. As the highest deliberative organ of the state, the Privy Council performed functions similar to those of the Hwabaek. Although the composition of the Council members in Koryŏ was slightly more inclusive than it was in Silla, the socio-political prerequisites for membership were based upon the same exclusive privileges of the ruling aristocracy. Like Silla, Koryŏ extended only to the top echelons of the government the right to sit in the highest deliberative body of the kingdom. Thus, the regular membership in the Council was opened only to the councillors of the state and the holders of the functional duties with the rank designation of lower third grade. This means that only the heads of major government offices in the Capital

and the Commanders and the Deputy Commanders of the eight units of the central army sat in the Privy Council.² The number of actual participants in the Council on one occasion totaled sixty-eight.³ The real work for the planning and important preliminary discussion of measures to be deliberated in the Council seems to have been done mainly by the presidium members of the Council which were composed of councillors of state from the Chancellery. The plenary session of the Council merely discussed the merits and limitations of the proposals made by the presidium members and then voted on them. In the rules of the Council, importance was attached not so much to the vote-getting power of a measure but rather to the soundness of the arguments advanced in favor of, or in opposition to, the measure. The outcome of the measure was determined, then, not by the majority vote but by the validity of the argument advanced during deliberation in the Council as it was judged by the king who presided over the Council meeting. Often the king rendered his decision against the wishes of the majority or even against those of the Chancellor. Nevertheless, his decision was final and it was accepted by all members of the Council.

²In addition to these regular members of the Council, there were six auxiliary members selected from the officials of the upper and lower fourth grade rank who were either Directors of sub-ministry offices or Executives of the six Ministries, and there were twenty-six minor officials also attached to the Council apparently to handle its routine work. KRS 77:22b.

³KRS 94:35b.

Apparently the theoretical justification for the king's final voice in the Council's deliberation was the Confucian principle of autocracy. But it is also noteworthy that such royal power was in accordance with the prerogative which was vested in the Sillan king as a fair umpire and unbiased arbitrator among the great nobles in the kingdom. The investiture of such a prerogative in the Crown, however, did not turn the Koryŏ king into a despotic monarch. It is true that the acceptance of the Confucian political philosophy meant that all power of the government theoretically emanated from the Crown, and that it was nominally exercised in the king's name as the only legitimate source of authority in the Kingdom. This was the reason why control over occupancy of the throne became a bona-fide contention in the power struggle of the ruling aristocracy in Koryŏ. The contention over control of the Crown, therefore, developed not so much because the king actually possessed the power in the government but rather because he was the nominal source of all governmental authority. The control of the Crown was an important prerequisite for the legitimatization of the actual power of the ruling aristocracy which was theoretically drawn from the Crown. Despite the Confucian concept of an autocratic monarchism, however, the Koryŏ king was in reality much restricted in his royal prerogatives. All official acts of the king, whether new laws or amendments to old laws, and even official appointments required confirmation of the councillors of state and the officials of policy criticism in the Chancellery before they could become effective. This restriction compelled

the king to depend upon the officials of the ruling stratum. Yet his power over the officials was very limited. He was not permitted to suppress his officials arbitrarily in their official performance; nor could he inflict punishment upon them in retaliation. All charges against the officials had to be processed through proper government channels before any official could be prosecuted. When the Koryŏ king insisted on his demand or was adamant in his opposition to official actions, the officials of policy criticism and the censors often waged a strike in protest and refused to attend to their duties until their grievances were heeded. It was necessary, therefore, for the Koryŏ monarch to maintain a good relationship with his officials if he was to avoid paralysis in the government. Since all key offices were occupied usually by the members of the aristocratic ruling stratum, the Koryŏ king in practice relied upon the ruling stratum for the actual conduct of government and he merely issued nominal authority by stamping his approval on their action. Yet, the Crown, clad in the prestige of the dynastic ruling house, still remained the main object of loyalty and the symbol of dynastic authority.

A couple of revealing incidents recorded in the Koryŏsa will illustrate the relationship between the powerful members of the ruling stratum and the monarch. One of these episodes occurred when King Ch'i made a royal journey to Haeju accompanied by the officials under the charge of Executive of the Chancellery Sŏ Hŭi. While camping overnight at Haeju, the king walked to Hŭi's tent and wished to enter for a cup of wine with Hŭi. But Hŭi politely refused to let the king in, saying that a subject's

tent was not fit for the king to be in. Barred from the tent, the king then asked Hŭi for a cup of wine outside. Again Hŭi refused to comply with the king's wish saying that his wine was not fit to be served to the king. The incident comically ends with the king exchanging a wine cup with Hŭi outside Hŭi's tent but only after the king had "the royal wine" brought in.⁴ Under the pretext of royal honor and propriety, we find in this episode a member of the aristocratic ruling stratum effectively blocking the monarch from fulfilling his wishes and finally making the monarch comply to his dictation.

Undoubtedly the oligarchical aristocrats often used their influence to check the monarch exercising his prerogative which was supposedly all powerful under the Confucian ideology. Moreover, the monarch was constrained to concur with the advice of his aristocratic officials on all matters of government under the Koryŏ practicē. The royal prerogative, therefore, was absolute only in name, and the fiction was maintained by the oligarchical aristocracy as a part of the dynastic constitution but to be used by them to strengthen their own positions.

A second incident in Sŏ Hŭi's biography also illustrates this point. When Chŏng U-hyŏn, a minor official and a chinsa degree holder, criticized the state of affairs in the kingdom, King Ch'i was extremely incensed by the content of U-hyŏn's memorial. The king summoned the councillors of state for consultation on the measures of punishment against U-hyŏn for the

⁴KRS 94:5b.

memorial. The king charged that U-hyŏn clearly overstretched his official function and acted on the matters which were beyond the call of duty. But the charge was at once rebuked by Sŏ Hŭi. Hŭi reminded the king that in ancient Chinese practice the remonstrance was never restricted to any office or official, nor was an official subjected to a retribution on account of his memorial. Moreover, Hŭi continued, U-hyŏn said in his memorial what was true and appropriate. Hŭi advised the king, therefore, to reward U-hyŏn for the memorial rather than to punish him. The final outcome was the promotion of U-hyŏn to the post of Censor with the king apologizing to him for the charge and rewarding Hŭi for his candid advice. The incident demonstrates Sŏ Hŭi's power as a member of the powerful ruling stratum and it shows his influence over King Ch'i, who was one of the ablest and most sinophilistic kings of Koryŏ. Hŭi used his influence and his knowledge of Confucianism effectively to change the king's mind. As a consequence, the king completely reversed his position on U-hyŏn's memorial. The incident reveals the extent of power and influence which the aristocratic officials could and actually did yield in Koryŏ. In fact, their power often determined the fate of the Koryŏ monarchs. Before 1170 no less than four Koryŏ kings are definitely known to have been deposed by the oligarchical aristocrats.

The Koryŏ ruling aristocracy was a tightly knit social group. Although their social status was not based on the kolp'um system, they practiced intensive inbreeding among themselves which was

strongly reminiscent of the inbreeding engaged by the Silla aristocracy. Thus the practice of endogamy was prevalent among the Koryŏ ruling stratum, though it was not so intensive as it was in Silla. Among the Koryŏ royal families marriage between brother and sister or between cousins was frequent. One of King So's two wives was his half-sister and the other was his niece, a daughter of his half-brother King Mu. King Yu's first wife was a daughter of the last Silla king, Kim Pu, but his other four wives were all his cousins. King Ch'i's first wife was also his cousin, a daughter of King So. King Sun, whose grandmother was a Silla princess married to Wang Kŏn, was actually born in wedlock.⁵ Among his many wives were two daughters and a niece of King Ch'i, and the niece was his cousin. It is noteworthy that King Sun was the only grandson of Wang Kŏn who had the blood of the Silla royal family in him, and he was placed on the throne in 1009 by the oligarchical aristocrats after they had forced the abdication of King Song.⁶

The Koryŏ kings also took their wives from the outstanding aristocratic families. King Sun took a granddaughter of Sŏ Hŭi (who was from the Sŏ clan of Ich'ŏn) as one of his wives. His other wives included three daughters of Kim Ūn-bu, a daughter of

⁵His mother was a sister of King Ch'i and a niece to his father Prince Uk. At the time she bore him, she lived as a royal widow since the death of her husband, King Yu.

⁶King Song was the grandson of the high-handed King So and succeeded King Ch'i to the throne at the latter's death in 998. The forced abdication of King Song also gave the Kitans an excuse for their invasion of Koryŏ in 1010.

Kim In-wi, and at least five more women from outstanding aristocratic families. Three sons born to the two daughters of Kim Ūn-bu (Yi Hō-gyōm's granddaughters) ascended the throne in successive turns after King Sun's death, and one of the three, King Hwi, became the lineal line that produced all subsequent Koryō kings. Needless to say, they, too, continued to take their wives from the aristocratic families and without exception these families were the oligarchical officials' families. This situation lasted until the military strongmen replaced the aristocratic civil officials in the ruling stratum after the military coup d'etat of 1170.

Intensive inbreeding was the order of the day among the oligarchical officials' families. This inbreeding tended to make them into a tightly knit aristocracy with a vested interest in the oligarchical system. As the bulwark of the aristocratic interests, their duty was to jealously keep guard over the oligarchical rule. Strict restrictions placed on the eligibility of the key positions in the government (especially the Chancellery, the Censorate, the Supreme Security Council, and the Hanlin Academy), were all designed to safeguard their monopoly of power. The choice Confucian education, the civil service examination, the official recommendation system, and the "protective" appointment system were all designed to perpetuate that monopoly. They therefore held a tight grip on the appointive, legislative, and financial powers and on the Confucian ideology through their control of the relevant agencies in the government.

The extensive inbreeding among the aristocratic ruling stratum also aided in developing identical interests among its members; it assisted in providing a unity for their common objectives and interests. They institutionalized the rules of conduct and the exercise of power in the government so as to minimize the areas of conflict among themselves. Unanimity of opinion and agreement of interests were patiently sought to maintain the cohesiveness of the ruling stratum and the unity of purpose among the oligarchical officials. When an individual member violated these rules and tried to offset the political equilibrium by amassing too much power, they ruthlessly purged him from the aristocratic sanctuary and banished him. Often the purge was extended to his family and followers. The political debacles of Yi Cha-ŭi and Yi Cha-gyŏm are two outstanding examples. But the debacle of their families did not cause the loss of the oligarchical status of their clan or their collateral families. The rest of the clan members continued to flourish as members of the ruling stratum. This might have been because of their intricate blood relationships with other oligarchical clans. In any case, it explains the durability and persistent reappearance of the great aristocratic families in the ruling stratum. It also explains why the non-aristocratic members of the top echelons, such as So T'ae-bo, Wang Kuk-mo, and Ch'ŏk Chun-gyŏng, generally flourished in the officialdom for only one generation, while their descendants soon disappeared into obscurity. The non-aristocratic descendants simply lacked a basis of power in society.

The basis of power for the oligarchical officials was clearly socio-economic. Their aristocratic social status qualified them for membership in the ruling stratum while their social status and economic resources together enabled them to obtain the choice education needed to prepare for government service. The basis of the social status for many of them was their Silla aristocratic origins, while some based their status on marital relations with the Wang ruling clan or on their distinctive service to the dynasty.

Of the two major groups in the Koryŏ officialdom under Wang Kŏn, former Silla aristocrats and Wang Kŏn's meritorious subjects of non-Silla aristocratic ancestry, the former were more often noted for their mastery of Chinese literature and Confucian statecraft while the latter were known more for their military leadership. However, it was the men of Silla aristocratic background and scholarly training that eventually emerged dominant in the Koryŏ officialdom. The turning point of their emergence was King So's vigorous prosecution of the military families and the introduction of the civil service examination.

King So's reign, therefore, marked an important epoch in the development of the Koryŏ ruling class. His destruction of the independent military power, his centralization of government authority, and his introduction of the civil service examination all helped to lay down the foundations on which Koryŏ subsequently built a centralized, Confucian orientated government. The major beneficiaries of this government were naturally the people of Silla aristocratic background and their descendants. In fact,

the endeavors of the architects of this government to preserve many Sillan practices in it made their eventual resurgence in the Koryŏ officialdom almost inevitable. In many ways the architects of the early Koryŏ government became instrumental therefore in instituting the continuity between late Silla and early Koryŏ.

In this respect, important endeavors were made by the Silla aristocrats who worked under Wang Kŏn. Wang Kŏn's effort to bring about the eventual mass transfer of the Silla aristocracy to Koryŏ and the subsequent absorption of the Silla aristocracy into the Koryŏ ruling class were the result of a policy which these men carved out on the basis of a realistic calculation of the social forces at work in Korea at the time. Even though the political foundation of the kolp'um system had gone through the process of disintegration in late Silla, the basic Silla social order was far from completely repudiated by the Koreans. On the contrary, its social foundation was still rooted deep in the society. The sudden fall of Chang Po-go and the initial success, as well as later debacle of Kim Kung-ye, all illustrate this point. Furthermore, as if to prove this point, in one of Wang Kŏn's first acts after his seizure of power he repelled many non-Silla socio-political nomenclatures and ideas which were introduced earlier by Kim Kung-ye.⁷ The action, in effect, reaffirmed the validity of the old social order in the new kingdom. It also quelled the disorder and con-

⁷KRS 1:11b.

fusion among the people which had arisen as a result of the disruptive effects of these introductions. Wang Kōn's act makes it quite clear that Korean society was not yet ready then to undertake a sweeping change in its social order. In fact, Koreans altered little of their basic social order throughout her traditional period. Thus, the Silla social order was essentially preserved in Koryō with minimum changes. The vigorous resurgence of the old Silla aristocracy in Koryō bears witness to this fact.

The resurgence of many Silla aristocrats in Koryō was also due to their ability to control the military and economic resources in their locality throughout the period of civil strife in late Silla. After the mid-ninth century Silla exerted little political influence over the regions outside of the capital and its vicinity. The near total collapse of the Silla government machinery left the aristocratic members to themselves in defending their privileges. This they were able to do largely because of their control of local military forces and their ability to control local economic resources, even after the Sillan political authority came under serious challenge.

As the chief beneficiaries of the war spoils in the period of the Silla expansion, they had gained large land holdings. And even after the wars of the unification, they continued to increase their land holdings in the form of *noġūp*. With these large holdings they were able to sustain their traditional control over the local military forces and to use them to assist Wang Kōn whenever it was to their interests to do so. When they came

under the political control of Koryŏ, their title over the *noğŭp* holdings was reaffirmed therefore under the new name of the *hunjŏn*. Moreover, for those Sillan aristocrats who became the members of the Koryŏ ruling stratum, the "protective" *sajŏn* grant of 1049 further strengthened their economic power base. In short, in return for their service, Koryŏ simply reaffirmed the traditional status of the Silla aristocracy and renewed their old authority in the Korean society.

Evidently the wealth of the oligarchical ruling stratum continued to bear direct importance on their political activities in Koryŏ as it was in Silla. Yi Cha-ŭi, for example, used his own wealth to hire men of arms and to train them for use in the event of a showdown with his political enemies. Yi Cha-gyŏm's fabulous wealth and wasteful luxury were reported by Hsŭ Ching, who visited the Koryŏ capital during Cha-gyŏm's heydays.⁸

The revival of the *sigŭp* grant in Koryŏ also indicates the correlation between the political and economic powers of the ruling stratum. Yi Cha-gyŏm in his heyday managed to obtain three nominal grants of *sigŭp* totaling 15,300 households, although the actual grants amounted to only three thousand households.⁹ The possession of *sigŭps* of this size could not have failed to increase his power position in Koryŏ. All oligarchical clans acquired their *sigŭps* in the place of their origins and they made their *sigŭp* the permanent power base for their clan. The *sigŭp* provided

⁸Hsŭ Ching, op. cit., p. 44

⁹KRS 127:12ab, 13a

them economic security as well as a place to return to after their retirement from public life. It also provided a basis for power in their own native area. As the basis of power of the ruling aristocratic clans, the size of the sigūp changed with developments in the political fortune of these clans.

Despite all these apparent similarities between the Koryō and Silla ruling aristocracies, the former was not an exact replica of the latter. The continuity stopped short of being complete and it gave way to an important breaking point between the two. The Koryō oligarchy was overwhelmingly civil and Confucian in outlook in sharp contrast to the predominantly martial character of the Silla oligarchy. The major causes for this break were the Chinese cultural influences. The first wave of cultural influence from China to temper the fierce martial spirit of the warrior-aristocrats of Silla was Buddhism. Buddhism, with its pacifistic and negative attitude toward life, apparently dampened the fighting spirit of the Silla aristocratic warriors. The Buddhist influence on the individual aristocrat in Silla started when the aristocratic youth commenced their training in the Chinese written language and it lasted until they completed their spiritual training under the guidance of the Buddhist monks. Buddhist influence in the end drove many Silla aristocrats to renounce their secular ambitions and civil responsibilities in search of a complete dedication to the religious teachings of Buddha.

The second important cultural influence from China was Confucianism. The Confucian philosophy with its emphasis on moral persuasion stood at the opposite pole to the Sillan tradition

of military virtues. It is true that the unification of Korea and prolonged peace in the country brought laxity to the habits of the Silla aristocratic warriors. But without the influence of Confucianism the Silla aristocracy would have remained basically a warrior class, retaining its old martial character. The massive introduction of Chinese culture, the steady rise in the interest of Chinese studies, and finally the acceptance of Confucian ideology fundamentally changed the outlook of the Sillan ruling class. The shift was from military to civil and from a spartan life of discipline to the moral and cultural refinement of Confucianism.

A powerful stimulus toward the new outlook came from the constant endeavor to fashion the Sillan government upon the model of the Chinese government system. Already by late Silla, the Koreans had adopted many Chinese names for their government and an attempt was made to introduce the Chinese civil service examinations on a limited scale. There was also the steady influx of Sillan students to T'ang China to receive Chinese education. These were sure signs of the gradual conversion to Confucian ideology by the Silla ruling class. Convinced of the indisputable superiority of Confucian statecraft over the native government system, a dedicated group of Confucian scholars of Silla aristocratic background worked ceaselessly for the complete acceptance of Confucian ideology by the new Koryŏ Kingdom. They served to the best of their ability and knowledge so as to construct a new government system in Korea. The efforts finally succeeded. The new government in Koryŏ was built according to the Confucian

political precepts and it took the form of the Chinese government. Under the new government, therefore, the literati who were trained in Confucianism emerged supreme--not the warriors who had mastered the techniques of war.

The final triumph over the military mode of life, which was for long imbued with the traditions of the Sillan warriors, was not achieved without a fight, however. Only after King So had dealt a devastating blow to the powerful military families, did Koryŏ accomplish its final victory for the Confucian mode of life in her ruling class. The effect of King So's great purge of 960 and the introduction of the civil service examination left a deep and lasting effect on the character of the Koryŏ ruling class. With only rare exceptions, the oligarchial members of the Koryŏ government came from literati families which in time developed excellent traditions of Confucian scholarship in their clan. The respect for Confucian scholarship was so firmly established among the Koryŏ ruling class that even the leading military families of early Koryŏ accepted the change in outlook of the Korean ruling class. When members of some of these military families emerged again in the Koryŏ ruling stratum, they appeared as Confucian scholar-officials, no longer as the warrior-officials they used to be. Thus, we find the descendants of Pak Su-gyŏng, a brilliant general under Wang Kŏn and a victim of King So's great purge, reappearing in the ranks of the Koryŏ ruling aristocracy after being obscure for three generations, not as leading generals but as outstanding literary masters. Executive Assistant of the Chancellery, Pak Il-lyang, a fifth generation since

Pak Su-gyōng, was not only a successful civil official but also a literati whose work was loudly praised even by the Chinese.

The acceptance of the Confucian ideology and the establishment of civil supremacy in the government also created an unhealthy attitude toward the military profession among the ruling aristocracy of early Koryō. This attitude eventually found its expression in the grossly unfair position of the military officials in the government. It also fostered an attitude of arrogant contempt among the civil officials toward the military officials. The civil supremacy, however, came to an abrupt end when disgruntled military officials staged a bloody coup d'etat against the ruling civil officials in 1170. The coup dealt a devastating blow to the power of the ruling civil aristocracy and instituted a military dictatorship which ruled Koryō for nearly ninety years. But until it abruptly entered into a period of political eclipse in 1170, the Koryō aristocratic civil officials ruled the kingdom in a fashion strongly reminiscent of the Silla oligarchical rule. In fact, one can properly say that the early Koryō ruling aristocracy essentially was a continuity of the Silla aristocracy in its social and functional context, though it nominally acted under the name of Confucianism.

GLOSSARY

Abyangju	押梁州
Ach'an	阿倉
Al-ch'ön	阿川
An Lu-shan	安祿山
An Po-rin	安南鱗
Andong	安東
Andong Todokpu	安東都督府
Annam Tohobu	安東都護府
Ansan-gun	安山郡
An-süng	安勝
po	空
chaesin	宰臣
chaböp	雜業
chamni	雜吏
chamnoin	雜路人
Chang Po-go	張保臯
changgun	將軍
Chang-gyöng	長慶
chang-jön	長田
changni	長吏
Chapch'an	匠倉
ch'ch'aung	次次左
Ch'angbu	倉部
Ch'angbugyöng	倉部卿
Ch'angjöng	倉正

ch'an-wei	識緯
Chen-kuan Cheng-yao	貞觀政要
cheng-chieh	正階
chesul-gwa	製述科
Chi Nog-yŏn	智祿延
Chi-busa	知府事
Chi-busa	知部事
Chi-so	智炤
chi-jŏn	紙田
Chiksuk	直宿
Chi-munha-sŏngsa	知門下省事
chin	鎮
chindu	鎮頭
chingol	真骨
Chinju	晉卅
chinsa	進士
Chipsa	執事
Chipsa-sŏng	執事省
Chi-sŏngsa	知省事
Ch'i (Sŏng-jong)	治 (成宗)
ch'isa	致仕
Ch'oe	崔
Ch'oe Cha	崔滋
Ch'oe Chae-an	崔齊顏
Ch'oe Chi-mong	崔知夢
Ch'oe Chin	崔漆
Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn	崔致遠

Ch'oe Ch'ung	崔冲
Ch'oe Haeng-gwi	崔行歸
Ch'oe Hwang	崔沆
Ch'oe Hong-jae	崔弘罕
Ch'oe Kwang-wŏn	崔光遠
Ch'oe Kye-hun	崔繼勳
Ch'oe Mal-li	崔萬理
Ch'oe Ŏn-wi	崔彦摛
Ch'oe Sa-ch'wi	崔思諏
Ch'oe Sa-jae	崔思齋
Ch'oe Suk	崔肅
Ch'oe Sŭng-no	崔承老
Ch'oe T'ak	崔卓
Ch'oe Ŭng	崔凝
Ch'oe Ŭn-ham	崔殷含
Ch'oe Wŏn	崔源
Ch'oe Yak	崔濬
Ch'oe Yang	崔亮
Ch'oe Yŏng-bu	崔永學
Ch'oe Yu-bu	崔有學
Ch'oe Yu-gil	崔惟吉
Ch'oe Yu-sŏn	崔惟善
Chojang	崔祖藏
Ch'ŏk Chun-gyong	拓俊京
Ch'ŏk Chun-sin	拓俊臣
Ch'ŏk Sun	拓純
Ch'ŏlwŏn-gun	鐵圓郡
chŏn	田

Ch'önan	天安
chöng	停
Chöng	鄭
chong	從
chöng	正
chong il p'um	從一品
chöng sam p'um	正三品
Chöng U-hyön	鄭又玄
Chöngbo	正申
Chöngdang-munhak	政堂文學
Ch'onggwan	總管
Chönggwang	正匡
Ch'önghaejin	清海鎮
Chöngjo	正朝
Ch'öngju	清州
Chöng-myöng (Sin-mun wang)	政明 (神文王)
Chöngön	正言
Chöngsüng	正丞
Chöngwi	正位
chöngyong	精勇
Chönju	全州
Chönjung	殿中
Chönjung-söng	殿中有
Ch'önu-wi	千牛衛
Chosön-guk	朝鮮國
Chou-i	周易
Chowi	造位

Chu	卅
Chu (Kyōng-jong)	值 (景宗)
Chubu	主簿
Ch'un-ch'u-tso-ch'uan	春秋左傳
Chungbang	重房
Chungch'u-wōn	中樞院
Chung-daegwang	重火匡
Chungdan-gyōng	中壇卿
Ch'ungju	忠州
Chungnangjang	中郎將
Chungsō-munha-sōng	中書門下省
Chungsō-sain	中書舍人
Chungsō-ryōng	中書令
Chungsō-sōng	中書省
Chungwōn	中原
Chungyun	中尹
Chun-hong	俊弘
ch'ūn-t'ien	均田
Chwasūng	佐丞
Chwa-, U -bogwōl	左右補闕
Chwa-, U -boksa	左右僕射
Chwa-, U -ganūi	左右諫議
Chwa-, U -sangsi	左右常侍
Chwa-, U -sūbyu	左右拾遺
Chwau-wi	左右衛
Chwayun	佐尹

feng-sui	凡水
fu	賦
Hae (In-jong)	楷 (仁宗)
Haeju	海州
Haeng Sǒngwan-ōsa	行選官御事
hae-yǒng	海領
hak-chǒn	學田
Haksa-sǔngji	學士承旨
Hallim-wǒn	翰林院
Han An-in	韓安仁
hanin	閑人
hanin-jǒn	閑人田
Hanju	漢州
Hǒ Chae	許載
Hobu	戶部
Hobu-sangsǒ	戶部尚書
Hojang	戶長
Hojǒng	戶正
Hong Yu	洪儒
Hou-chou	後周
Hsiao-ching	孝經
Hsin-T'ang-shu	新唐書
Hsi-tsung	僖宗
Hstǔ Ching	徐競
Hstǔ-chou	徐州
Huai	淮
Huang Ch'ao	黃巢
Hu-baekche	後百濟

Hüi	熙
Hüm (Tök-chong)	欽 (德宗)
Hüng-mu	興武
Hüng'wi-wi	興威衛
hunjön	勳田
Hwabaek	和白
Hwang Chu-ryang	黃周亮
hwangdo	皇都
hwangje	皇帝
Hwangju	黃州
Hwarang-do	花郎道
Hwi (Mun-jong)	徽 (文宗)
Hyöngbu-p'ansa	刑部判事
Hyönhwa	玄化
Hyön-ryöng	縣令
Hyöpch'ön	陝川
I	吏
I Hün-am	伊所麓
Ibalch'an	伊伐食
Ibu-sirang	吏部侍郎
Ich'an	伊食
Ich'ön	利川
idup'um	二頭品
ildup'um	一頭品
Ilgilch'an	一古食
Im Kae	林槩
inp'um	人品
i-öp	醫業

I-wen-chih	藝文志
kaeguk-kongsin	開國功臣
Kaesöng	開城
Kaesöng-bu	開城府
Kakp'um chonsi kwa	各品田紫科
Kakkan	角干
Kam	監
Kamigunsa	咸義軍使
Kammun-wi	監門衛
Kang Cho	康兆
Kang Ki-ju	康起珠
Kangju	康州
Kangnŭng	江陵
Kao P'ien	高駢
Kao-tsung	高宗
Karak	駕洛
Kigöju	起居注
Ki-hwön	箕萱
kiin	其人
kijöng	職傳
Kilsa	吉士
Kim	金
Kim Ch'aek	金策
Kim Ch'an	金繁
Kim Chöng-jun	金廷俊
Kim Chun	金山俊

Kim Ch'un-ch'u (Mu-yöl wang)	金春秋 (武烈王)
Kim Hyang	金珣
Kim In-gyu	金仁揆
Kim In-jon	金仁存
Kim In-mun	金仁門
Kim In-wi	金因謂
Kim In-yun	金仁允
Kim Kil	金佶
Kim Ko	金詰
Kim Ku-hae	金仇 亥
Kim Kung-ye	金弓 裔
Kim Kyöng-yong	金景 裔
Kim Mu-ryök	金武 力
Kim Pu	金傅
Kim Pu-il	金富 伯
Kim Pu-sik	金富 軾
Kim Sang-gi	金上 琦
Kim Sön-sök	金先 錫
Kim Ŭi-wön	金義 元
Kim Ŭn-bu	金殷 傅
Kim Yag-on	金若 溫
Kim Yang-gam	金余 良 鑑
Kim Yu-sin	金厥 信
Ko Sök	高碩
Ko Ŭi-hwa	高義 和
Koguryö	高句麗
kolp'um	骨 訖

kongdök-che	功德齋
konghae-jön	公麻田
kongjön	公田
Kongju	公州
kongsu-jön	公須田
kongsu-jönji	公須田地
kongüm-jön	功蔭田
Kongüm-jönsi-böp	功蔭田紫法
kunsin	近臣
Kön-un (Hye-gong wang)	乾運 (惠恭王)
Köppalch'an	級伐倉
Koryö	高麗
Koryösa.	高麗史
kösögan	居西平
kubun-jön	口分田
kugin	國人
Kukcha-gam	國子監
Kukcha-hak	國子學
kümgol	金骨
Kümgwan-gaya	金官伽耶
Kümo-wi	金吾衛
Kümsöng	金城
kun	君
Kun	軍
Kun	郡
Kun'gi-gam	軍器監
kungwön-jön	宮院田

kun-jŏn	軍田
kunsin	群臣
Kunyun	軍尹
Kuo-hstleh	國學
Kŭpsa jung	給事中
Ku Yŭn	顧雲
kwa-jŏn	科田
Kwangju	廣州
Kwangyang	光陽
Kwŏn Sangsŏ-byŏngbusa	權尚書兵部事
Kwŏn Su	權秀
kyŏl	結
Kyŏn Hwŏn	甄萱
Kyŏng	卿
Kyŏnggi	京畿
Kyŏnggido	京畿道
Kyŏngju	慶州
Kyŏngsan	慶山
Kyŏngsang-bukto	慶山北道
Kyŏngsŏng-jujak-chŏn	京城周作典
Kyŏngwŏn	慶源
Liao	遼
Li-chi	禮記
Lo Yin	羅隱
Lo-lang	樂浪
Lun-yŭ	論語

Malgal (Mo-ho in Chinese)	鞞鞞
Mao-shih	毛詩
maripkan	麻立干
Meng Ch'u	孟初
Mok	牧
Mokp'o	木浦
Moksa	牧使
Mu (Hye-jong)	武(憲宗)
muban	武班
Munha-sirang-p'yŏngjangsa	門下侍郎平章事
Muju	武州
Mun Kong-mi	文公美
munban	文班
Mun-hi	文姬
Munha-sijung	門下侍中
Munha-sŏng	門下省
Munha-su-sijung	門下守侍中
munsin-wŏlgwaje	文臣月課制
Myŏng (Min-ae wang)	明(閔哀王)
myŏnggyŏng-gwa	明經科
Myŏngju	冥州
naejangt'aek-chŏn	叡庄宅田
Naema	奈麻
Naesa-sŏng	叡史省
Na ju	羅州
Nangnang	樂浪
namban	南班

Namwŏn	南原
Nangjang	郎將
Nangjung	郎中
Nangsa	郎舍
nisagŭm	尼師令
No Tan	盧且
Nobi-anhŏm-bŏp	奴婢按驗法
nogŭp	祿邑
Noksa	錄事
odup'um	五頭品
Oeŭpsa	外邑使
oeyŏk-chŏn	外役田
O	吳
O T'ak	吳卓
Ong (Suk-chong)	鬲 (肅宗)
Ŏsa-daebu	御史大夫
Ŏsa-japtan	御史雜端
Ŏsa-jungsŭng	御史中丞
Pae Hyŏn-gyŏng	裴玄慶
Paekche	百濟
Pajinch'an	彼珍倉
Pak	朴
Pak Il-lyang	朴寅亮
Pak Su-gyŏng	朴守卿
Pak Sur-hi	朴述熙
Pak Su-mun	朴守文
p'algwan	八關

pang	房
Panju	班主
P'ansa	判事
P'ap'yǒng	坡平
Pisǒ-sogam	秘書少監
po	步
p'o	布
Pǒb-min (Mun-mu wang)	法敏 (文武王)
pog-ǒp	卜業
Punggi	豐基
pongwan	本貫
posǔng	保勝
Poyun	甫尹
Pu	部
Pubyǒngjǒng	副兵正
Pugwǒn	北原
Puhajang	副戶長
Puhojǒng	副戶正
p'um	品
p'ungnyu	風流
Pyǒl'chang	別將
Pyǒngbu	兵部
Pyǒngbugyǒng	兵部卿
Pyǒngjǒng	兵正
Pyǒngni	兵吏
P'yǒngsan	平山
P'yǒngyang	平壤

Sabyōng	司兵
Sach'ang	司倉
Sach'ōn	司天
Sach'ōn-dae	司天台
Sach'ōn-gam	司天監
sadup'um	四頭品
saengjok	生族
Saji	舍知
sajōn	私田
Sakchu	朔州
samdup'um	三頭品
Samgugyusa	三國遺事
Samguksagi	三國史記
Samjung-daegwang	三重大匡
sam kong	三公
sam sa	三師
Samsa	三司
Samsa-sa	三司使
sam sōng	三省
Samun-hak	四門學
Sangdūng	上等
Sangjanggun	上將軍
Sangju	上州
Sangju	尚州
Sangjuguk	上柱國
Sangsō-byōngbu	尚書兵部
Sangsō-chwa-, u -sūng	尚書左右丞

Sangsŏ-dosŏng	尚書都省
Sangsŏ-hobu	尚書戶部
Sangsŏn-wŏn	尚書膳院
Sangsŏ-ryŏng	尚書令
sangsuri	上守使
sang-yŏng	常令員
Sanwŏn	散員
san yuk sangsŏ	散六尚書
sasingwan	事審官
Sach'an	沙倉院
sawŏn-jŏn	寺院田
se (sui in Chinese)	歲
Shang-shu	尚書
Shantung	山東
shih	詩
Shih Ta-li P'ing-shih	詩大理評事
shou-ling	守令
Shuang Che	雙控
Shuang Chi	雙冀
Shun	舜
si	柴
Si Ōsa-jungsŭng	試御史中丞
sigŭp	食邑
Sijung	侍中
Silla	新羅
simuch'aek	時務策
Sin Sung-gyŏm	申崇謙

Sin-göm	神劍
Sinho-wi	神虎衛
Sinju	新卅
Sinju	信卅
Si-ōsa	侍御史
sip chōng	十停
Sirang	侍郎
So (Kwang-jong)	昭(光宗)
Sō Hui	徐熙
So T'ae-bo	邵台輔
sōdang	誓幢
Sogam	少監
so-gyōng	小京
Sogyōng	少卿
Sōgyōng-yususa	西京留守事
So-jubu	小主簿
Sōk	昔
sōk	石
Sōk ch'ong	釋聰
Sōl Ch'ong	薛聰
Son	孫
Song (Mok-chong)	誦(穆宗)
Songak-kun	松岳郡
sōnggol	聖骨
Sōn-hoe	善會
sōngju	城主
Son Kwan	孫冠

Sǒnsa	仙史
Soo	小鳥
Sǒsǒ-wǒn	瑞書院
Sǒwǒn	西原
su	守
Sudǒk Manse	水德滿歲
Sun (Hyǒn-jong)	詢 (顯宗)
sung	頌
Sung	宋
sǔng	丞
Sǔngju	昇州
Su Sagong	守司空
Su-yǒ	壽餘
Taeach'an	大阿含
taedǔng	大等
Taegakkan	大角干
Taegu	大邱
Taegwang	大匡
Taehak	大學
Taejanggun	大將軍
Taejǒng	隊正
Taenaema	大奈麻
Taeo	大鳥
Taesa	大舍
Taesa	大使
Taesang	大相
taesin	大臣

Taesŭng	大丞
T'aebok-kam	太卜監
T'aebong	泰封
T'ae-daegakkan	太犬角干
T'aeja-usŏ	太子右庶
T'aesu	太字
Tai-tsu	太祖
T'ai-tsung	太宗
T'ang	唐
T'ang Kao-tsung	唐高宗
Tangdaedung	堂大等
T'ao Huang Ch'ao hsi-wen	詩黃巢檄文
To Chi-gyŏm	卜智謙
Tobyŏngmasa	都兵馬使
toch'am (t'u-ch'an in Chinese)	圖讖
Todang	都堂
Todok	都督
Todokpu	都督府
Tongji-chungch'u-wŏnsa	同知中樞院事
Tohang-gyŏng	都航卿
Tohangsa	都航司
Tohangsa-gyŏng	都航司卿
Tohobu	都護府
tŭngnan	得難
To-sŏn	道諺
tu	斗
tun-jŏn	屯田

U (Ye-jong)	保 (睿宗)
Ŭi-jang	義莊
U-jŭng (Sin-mu wang)	祐徵 (神武王)
Uk	郁
Uk (Hŏn-jong)	昱 (獻宗)
Ŭmsŏng-sŏ	音聲署
Un (Sŏn-jong)	運 (宣宗)
Ungju	態州
Ŭngyang-gun	鷹揚軍
Wando	莞島
wang	王
Wang Ka	王嘏
Wang Kŏn	王建
Wang Kuk-mo	王國髦
Wang Kyu	王規
Wang Pong-gyu	王逢規
Wang Sig-yŏm	王式廉
Wang Son	王詵
Wang Tong	王同
Wang (or Pak) Yu	王 (朴) 儒
Wang Yuk	王育
Wang Yung	王隆
wanggyŏng	王京
Wangsa	王師
Wen-hsien	文選
oeyŏk-chŏn	外役田
Wi	衛
Wi	尉

Wi Kye-jǒng	魏繼廷
Wǒnbo	元甫
Wǒnbong-sǒng	元鳳省
Wǒn-dang	願堂
Wǒn-gwang	圓光
Wǒnju	原州
Wǒnoerang	員外郎
Wǒn-hyo	元曉
Wǒnyun	元尹
Wu Ching	吳兢
wu-hsing	五行
Wu-ning	武寧
Yang-gil	梁吉
Yangju	梁州
Yangju	良州
Yangju	揚州
Yao	堯
Yebu-p'ansa	禮部判書
Yi	李
Yi Cha-gyǒm	李資謙
Yi Cha-in	李資仁
Yi Chak-ch'ung	李作忠
Yi Cha-sang	李子祥
Yi Cha-ŭi	李資義
Yi Cha-wi	李子威
Yi Cha-wǒn	李資元

Yi Cha-yŏn	李 子 淵
Yi Chi-baek	李 李 知 白
Yi Chi-bo	李 李 元 甫
Yi Chi-jo	李 李 元 凶
Yi Chi-mi	李 李 之 美
Yi Chi-ŏn	李 李 之 彦
Yi Chi-wŏn	李 李 之 元
Yi Chŏng-gong	李 李 靖 恭
Yi Han	李 李 翰
Yi Ho	李 李 顥
Yi Hŏ-gyŏm	李 李 許 謙
Yi (or Kyŏn) Hwŏn	李 李 (甄) 萱
Yi In-no	李 李 仁 老
Yi Kong-su	李 李 公 壽
Yi Kyŏng-p'il	李 李 景 泌
Yi Mong-yu	李 李 夢 遊
Yi Nul	李 李 訥
Yi O	李 李 穎
Yi Sin-sŏk	李 李 申 錫
Yi Yŏ	李 李 穎
ying-yang	陰 陽
Yo (Chŏng-jong)	堯 (定宗)
Yŏ-ch'ŏl	如 哲
yŏk	殺
yŏkpun-jŏn	殺 分 田
Yŏm Chang	闇 長
yŏndung	燃 燈

yǒng	領
Yǒng Munha-Sangsǒ-dosǒngsa	領門下尚書都省事
Yongho-gun	龍虎軍
Yǒngju	榮州
yǒngǒp-chǒn	永業田
Yǒnsang	筵上
Yǒnsu	延壽
Yu	劉
Yu In-jo	柳仁著
Yu Sǒk	柳爽
yuktup'um	文頭品
Yulhak-chogyo	律學助教
Yun	尹
Yunae	維乃

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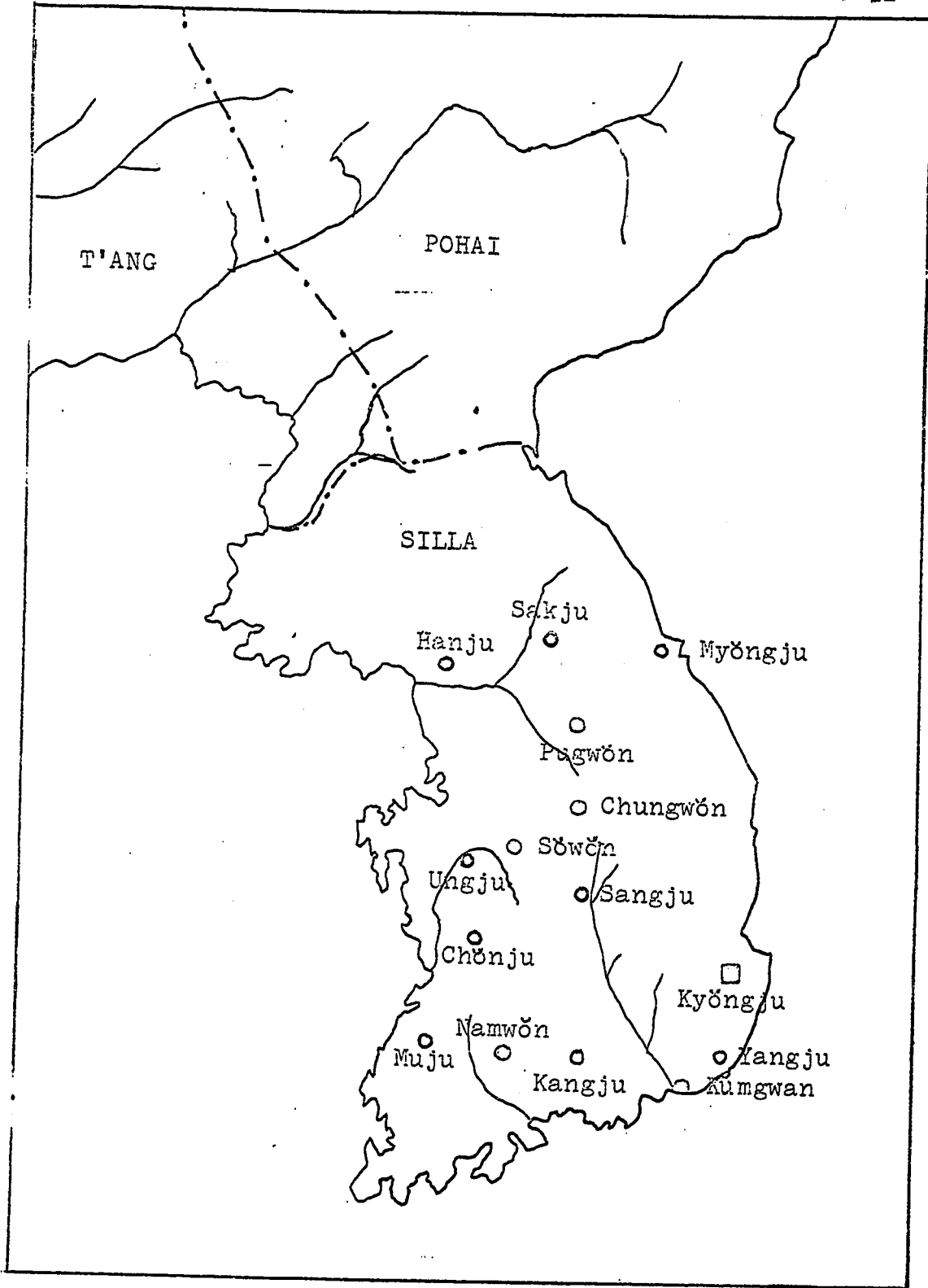
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APPENDIX

MAP I

FIVE SO-GYÖNG AND NINE CHU OF SILLA



The Seventeen Grade Official Ranks

					Two new honorific grades added
Ibalch'an	1				
Ich'an	2				
Chapoh'an	3				
Pajinch'an	4				
Taeach'an	5				
Ach'an	6	6			Subdivided into four grades
Ilgilch'an	7	7			
Sach'an	8	8			
Küppalch'an	9	9			
Jaenaema	10	10	10		Subdivided into nine grades
Naema	11	11	11		
Taesa	12	12	12	12	Subdivided into seven grades
Gaji	13	13	13	13	
Kilisa	14	14	14	14	
Taco	15	15	15	15	
Soo	16	16	16	16	
Chowi	17	17	17	17	
Grade					
Bone	Sönggol Chingol	Yuktup'um	Odup'um	Sadup'um	

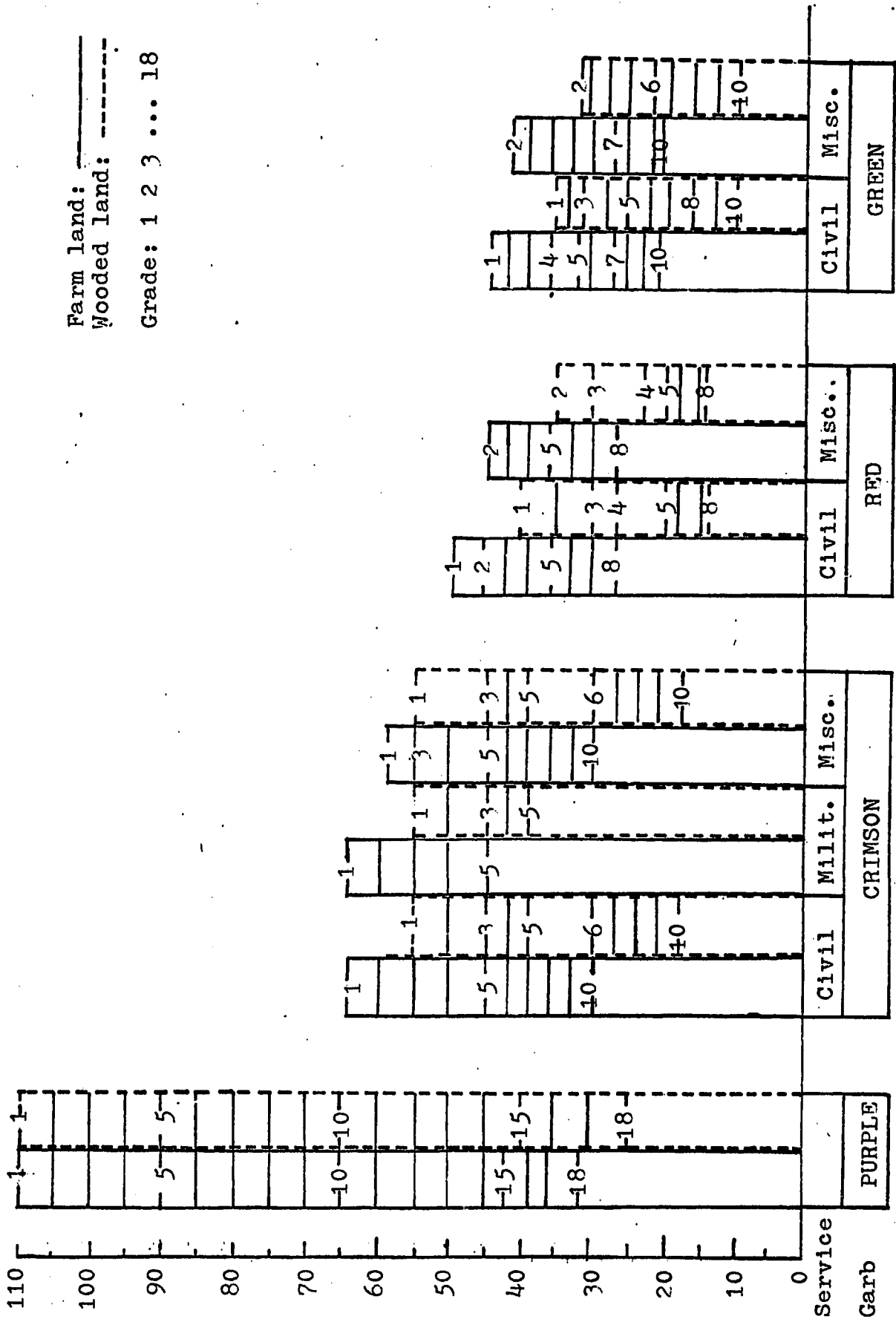
Remarks: The seventeen grade titles are transliterated above in accordance with the modern Korean pronunciation of their Chinese characters. Their original pronunciations are mostly lost.

Source: KRS 78:6b-8b

Chart II

THE OFFICIAL STIPEND SCALE OF 976 A.D.

Kyōl



Source: KRS 78: 6b-8b

TABLE I
THE OFFICIAL STIPEND SCALE OF 276 A.D.

Unit: Kyōl

Garb	Grade (p'um) :																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Service	Land	Stipend																	
PUR- PLE	farm	110	105	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	42	39	36	32
	wood	110	105	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25
ORIN-	farm	65	60	55	50	45	42	39	36	33	30								
	wood	55	50	45	42	39	30	27	24	21	18								
SON	farm	65	60	55	50	45													
	wood	55	50	45	42	39													
	farm	60		55	50	45	42	39	36	33	30								
	wood	55		45	42	39	30	27	24	21	18								
RED	farm	50	45	42	39	36	33	30	27										
	wood	40	35	30	27	20	18	15	14										
	farm	45	42	42	39	36	33	30	27										
	wood	35	30	30	27	20	18	15	14										
GREEN	farm	45	42	39	36	32	30	27	25	23	21								
	wood	35	33	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10								
	farm	42	39	36	36	33	30	27	25	22	21								
	wood	32	31	28	28	25	22	19	16	13	10								

VITA

Hi-woong Kang was born December 25, 1931 in Chinhai, Korea. He received his elementary and high school education in Pusan, Korea, graduating the Pusan Technical High School in 1951. He then entered the College of Education, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea, where he majored in English literature.

In 1954 he came to the United States to continue his education. In 1956 he was granted the degree of Bachelor of Arts in political science and history from Berea College, Berea, Kentucky. In 1958 he received a degree of the Master of Arts in Far Eastern history from the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. He then entered the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington to work for the doctorate in Far Eastern history. At the University of Washington he was a recipient of teaching assistantship from 1958 to 1960, and he was a research associate from 1960 to 1962 and a Lecturer in 1962-3. In September, 1963 he became an assistant professor of History in the Department of History at the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

In December, 1962 he was married to Ingrid E. Stephanson of Stockholm, Sweden. They have a daughter, Anita Hesuk, born August, 1963 in Toledo, Ohio.