Mar Iazed-buzid, the Great Donor: Part 4C

Palace Examination (detail)
Song Dynasty painting

* * * * * * *

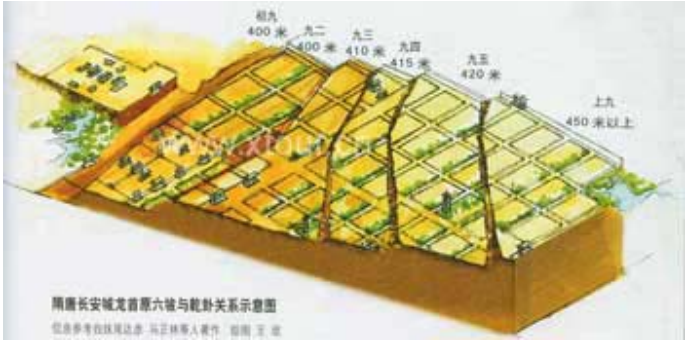
The Inscription is emphatic that I-ssu received his high appointment *by examination*. Such a citation indicates that I-ssu was a man of great ability and personal merit. It distinguishes him even further. As a native son of the Northwest, he had sprung from a later generation of the same wild Turkic stock as the mixed breed northern aristocrats who continued to be prominent in the Tang elite. The men of this breed, of the same Sino-Turkic bloodline as the emperors themselves, were hard-drinking, hard-riding fighting men, who hunted with falcons on their country estates and whose women played polo. But in contrast to this race of hardy roisterers, among whom merit meant good breeding alone, I-ssu exhibited as well the strong intellectual and cultural qualities that were the hereditary claims of the sons of Han, the scholarly officials who had descended from the old southern dynasties.

Kuo Tzu-i Anonymous portrait

If the procedure of I-ssu's appointment followed the custom of the age, Duke Kuo Tzu-i, I-ssu's previous superior, had recommended I-ssu as a worthy and talented man to the emperor for direct appointment. Then, in a palace examination, which was regarded as highly as the highest metropolitan examination, I-ssu presented himself. For this high office, I-ssu stood not before a steward of the Ministry of Personnel but before the emperor himself. To show that his learning and his art did not extend carelessly in all directions but was coiled and interwoven, I-ssu appeared for one day before his examiner – the emperor himself – who tested his calligraphy and his ability to compose solutions to practical administrative problems, (*See* Supplement 4) and who judged I-ssu's personal appearance and manner of speaking and checked his dossier for evidence of virtuous conduct, talent, and zeal. (*See* Supplement 5) Once found acceptable, and exempted by the prestige of his rank from the indignity of three-year review, I-ssu would then have been asked to indicate his preference for appointment from the expected vacancies

suitable to his rank and, with the emperor's approval, to assume his new position. It seems to me an irony of I-ssu's religious mission that the last step of his recruitment into government service – the formal pronouncement of his appointment, when he, as an appointee, expressed his thanks in imperial audience before taking up his assigned duties – would have required him to commit the incongruous act of prostrating himself before the emperor and, striking his head upon the ground nine times, to utter respectful words; this, in the same audience hall where his predecessor, A-lo-pen, on his mission to notify the empire of the liberation promised through practice of the Luminous Teaching, had stood.

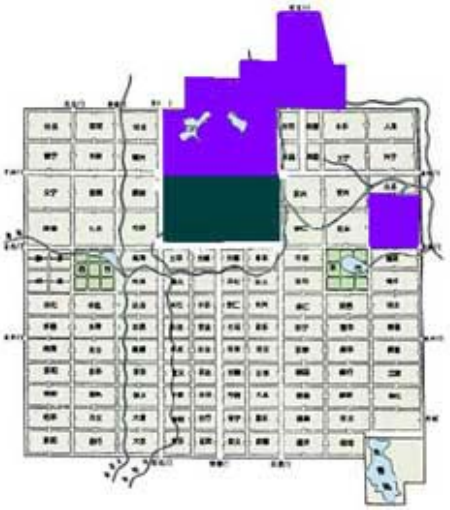
When the emperor bestowed on I-ssu a new gold seal, dangled from a purple sash, I-ssu fulfilled in himself the Tang ideal. In a military establishment that consisted of citizen-soldiers, he had fought; in the bureaucracy of learned men, who shared a common educational background and a commitment to Confucian principles of government, (*See* Supplement 6) he had taken office. In this imperial community, the emperor was considered the father and mother of the people, and all officials were expected to share his responsibility. The emperor provided a link of communication between this world and the Ruler of the Universe. It was I-ssu's sacred duty to cultivate his natural talents in the hope that he might provide a worthy channel of intercourse between the emperor and the People of the One Hundred Surnames – a service unblemished by thought of self – to serve, to advise, and to regenerate, if renovation was necessary. Following his appointment, I-ssu would have lived the only way of life considered worthy for a man of intellectual ability.



The site of Chang-an had a gentle downward slope from southwest to northwest and, according to geographical altitude, could be divided into six levels. It is said that, following calculations using the I Ching, the order of each of the six areas was ascertained, then the function of each area was decided by the virtue reflected from each. The noblest area was planned for Buddhist and Taoist temples. The second level was planned as the Palace City, a huge courtyard with all the residences and offices of the emperor. The third level was planned as the Royal City, a huge courtyard that included the office space for all governmental officials. The fourth level was planned for two marketplaces. The sixth level was designated to be a royal park. All other areas were residential. The locations of the great temples and markets were convenient for all residents. The Royal City was just south of the Palace City, so officials could

> deliver files to emperors quickly without disturbing the life of ordinary civilians. And everyone had the right and opportunity to enjoy the beautiful urban and natural scenery from the high tower in the park. All the numbers of the blocks and the numbers on the gates in the city were determined by astronomy and the lunar calendar. The entire city was considered a model of the universe.

The emperor – The Above One, The Lord Above, The Lone Man (all terms for the emperor, whose name was never spoken) – lived in the north quarter of the palace enclosure and always sat facing south. One vast quadrangle of the Imperial City was placed to the left of the emperor’s seat; the other was placed to the emperor’s right. The left government building – with willows by its side and with banners and ceremonial weapons crowded together before it, level as a field of ripe grain – housed the Department of the Left, the Imperial Chancellery. It was this departmental building which I-ssu entered through the Green (east) Gate to serve as a civil officer. Military men occupied the right government building, the less honorable position, to the west.



Master plan of Chang-an in the Tang Dynasty. Purple indicates the Palace City. Dark Blue indicates the Royal City. Green indicates markets. Light blue indicates the lake in the royal park.

No one outside the immediate entourage of the ruler—that is, the palace ladies and eunuchs—slept within the Forbidden City. Robed ministers like I-ssu ascended terraces to their storied houses in guarded places and entered their homes through mansion gateways, halberds waving before their noble gate, by their number telling their rank, and with statues in their yards. By day, I-ssu’s carriage awning and cap of office was one of those that filled the capital; in the evening, he came home to rooms scented with aloeswood, at leisure to inspect his pointed turban at the screen or to sup on fragrant meats by the pool.

Tang era architecture

Of the three titles given to I-ssu in the Inscription, the first, Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon (*Chin-tzu kuang-lu tai fu*), a prestige title, assigned I-ssu his status in the capital. (In formal documents, such as the Inscription, this title always took precedence over nominal offices.) As an indication of his rank – the upper class of the third rank in a ranking system of nine degrees – this title afforded him the visible privilege of wearing the golden fish from his waist chain and a certain emolument from the state. For I-ssu, this award would have been an annual stipend of some thousands of bushels, paid to him partly in grain and partly in equivalents of silk or cash. The second title, Associate Military Vice Commissioner (*Tung chieh tu fu shih*) of the Northern Region, identified I-ssu as an officer actively engaged in imperial service. The third title, Director of the Palace Administration (*Tien-chung-chien*) by examination, indicated a duty assignment and his responsibility at the capital. Serving at this appointment, I-ssu, together with a senior do-director of the same rank and a four-man directory staff, regulated the activities of the non-eunuch central government agency, responsible to the Central Office of the Secretariat-Chancellery for provisioning all those within the palace walls through the Six Services. (*See* Supplement 7)

Performance at Imperial Court Tang Dynasty painting

< PART 4D: COURT CIRCLES >

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement 4:
The Confucian Test of Knowledge

Tang Dynasty drawing of Confucius by Wu Daozi

Confucius once remarked that if one corner of a subject were revealed to a man and he did not understand the whole, he was not worth teaching.

Supplement 5:
The Dossier of Genealogy

Birthday reception for Duke Kuo Tzu-i Qing Dynasty porcelain vase

The Chinese, in judging a man, think it is of vital importance to look back at least three generations to examine what the education of the family has been.

Supplement 6:
A Bureaucracy of Learned Men

Tang officials
Artist unknown

There was no other social or economic basis for integrated nationhood. Regional differences were minimized by the rise of this elite class of officials who were recruited nationwide and used their folk heritage as a reservoir from which to constantly renew themselves. Even when linguistic differences made oral communication impossible, educated Chinese everywhere wrote the same characters.

Supplement 7:
The Six Services

Daming Palace, royal residence of the Tang emperors in Chang-an
Unknown artist's conception

Each of the Six Services, supervised by a pair of chief

stewards and several foremen, performed a specific art of functional necessity. One provided the emperor his sedan-chair service with a staff of fifteen unranked bearers, two chief stewards, two foremen, and four unranked supervisors stationed at both the Office and the Court of the Imperial Mausoleum. Another supplied Taoist prescriptions of medicinal herbs and medical supplies. For imperial personnel, the Livery Service managed the use of horses, including those maintained in the Six Stables and the Six Corrals. A fourth service had charge of the emperor's personal quarters in the imperial palace, preparing his baths, making special accommodations for great ceremonial occasions, and providing the tents and other accommodations the emperor required while he traveled away from the capital. The Clothing Service provided and maintained the clothing and accoutrements for the emperor's public appearances, and always involved eunuchs to some extent. This service prepared the emperor's Dragon Robes each day for the morning levee of the imperial court, held before dawn in Southern Fragrance Hall, and court dress when the emperor held audience with councillors, court officials, or envoys of redemption, like Rabban A-lo-pen, who a century before had come to found the mission which I-ssu now, in his own way, continued. The Food Service supplied necessities for the imperial table (including the eight delicacies on which the emperor was supposed to dine: bear's claw, deer's tail, duck's tongue, turbot roe, camel's hump, carp's tail, ox marrow, and gibbon's lips), and often cooperated with central government agencies such as the Court of Imperial Entertainments, eunuchs, and palace women to set out the imperial banquets, banquets that were the scenes of poetry, where groups of educated southern guests, the indigenous beautiful people of the Central Flowery Kingdom, turned their emotional life into verse composed on the occasion, often to a specified rhyme. The stewards of the service were responsible, among other things, for preliminary tasting of the food served at the imperial table, and set the table with chopsticks of rhinoceros horn, a material used as a poison detector and

known for its aphrodisiac and magical properties. The meat carvers, with tiny bells on their knives, executed a kind of ballet as they carved, their green firebird knives cutting the food into strands fine as silk cords. The guests drank wine and delighted in the season's vegetables, in delicious frosted pears, and in bitter dates and cold melons. Educated and talented courtesans, the "evening orioles" – powdered beauties in glistening sendal robes, with fashionable long, slender eyebrows, the green-black "willow leaves," brushed close to their eyes, and with hair that black clouds had taught how to pile – served as official hostesses and offered clever entertainment. On holidays, outings were exhibitions of high living where courtly women with delicate complexions and haughty manners sat in gardens with princess thoughts, eating and wasting the rich and expensive food that the Service provided for their conspicuous consumption. Their precious courses were sent to them in succession on flying steeds: badger's paws and turtle soup, purple camel hump peeking out from the kingfisher cauldron, rows of shining white fish lying on crystal platters clear as water. Palace eunuchs, their mounted couriers, galloped up to the throngs of guests bearing these additions to the feast from the imperial kitchen.

Earth Changes and Second Advent Prophecy

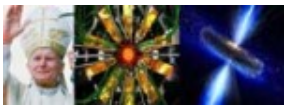


PHOTO: Earth Changes Media

I have been a subscriber to Mitch Battros's Earth Changes Media (earthchangesmedia.com) for two years or more and have always been impressed by his capable research and thoroughness. Consolidation of ancient wisdom and current scientific findings are keys to his study of the effects of the sun on the earth and most interesting in light of our Community's Prophecies.

Mitch Battros presents fascinating, and sometimes shocking, research from the world's top scientists. After years of dialogue with these experts, Mitch has been accepted into the guarded halls of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) , NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), ESA (European Space Agency), the Royal Observatory, the US Naval Observatory, and other highly esteemed scientific bodies.

In addition to the latest research on the Sun's influence on our "weather," Mitch also presents groundbreaking evidence of how the Sun and other celestial orbs produce "charged particles" and their impact on humanity.

Here are some important articles to read for more details:

(Part 1) Something is Happening with the Earth's Core

(Part 2) Magnetic Pole Reversals and Possible Crustal Displacement

(Part 3) What Are the Effects to Animals and Humans?

(Part 4) We Are Witnessing a Pole Reversal "Right Now"

Anyone can keep up with things by going about once a week to the Earth Changes Media site yourself, but a membership gets you a notification whenever Mitch has something new and also gives you access to the archives. I am presenting his links in order for you to see where he is going with current thought. Part IV in this group of articles discusses the earth trending

in the direction of a magnetic pole shift involving earthquakes, volcanoes, and extreme weather—all of which have been part of our Prophecies. It seems to me that he brings our Prophecies up-to-date and fills out the picture we already have.

Article and links submitted by Frieda Nelson

Mar Iazed-buzid, the Great Donor: Part 4B

Testers for imperial examinations. Song Dynasty painting

*

The Inscription is emphatic that I-ssu received his high appointment *by examination*. This phrase leaves open two

possible paths toward his life's conclusion **(G** and **H)**, and leaves me uncertain about which path he followed. My uncertainty derives from the two possible interpretations, in Tang usage, of the single word *shih*, which preceded his title as Director of Palace Administration.

(G)

Taken to mean "probationary," *shih* refers to the status of a newly appointed official during his first year of service at an appointment, a dubious honor to be recorded in stone if I-ssu did not ultimately make the grade. Following this interpretation, the word suggests that I-ssu led a short courtly life and held his high administrative position for only one year in attendance to either Emperor Hsuan-tsung or Su-tsung. Here possibility bifurcates again. In one possible version of the story **(G_1)**, I-ssu leaves Balkh as a candidate for examination under Hsuan-tsung as a provincial, but so worthy that he is appointed primarily on his intellectual merit above thousands of other worthies; he serves the traditional probationary period of one year; during the invasion of 755, he flees the city and follows the Emperor to Ma-wei; there I-ssu joins the army of the heir apparent, who becomes Su-tsung, and is appointed to be a general because of his high standing; he makes war on the rebels; then I-ssu either returns to Chang-an when Kuo Tzu-i is recalled in 760 or else he continues on in a military career until his retirement a few years later. In the second possible version of the story **(G_2)**, I-ssu establishes a military career under Su-tsung at Ling-wu first; he spends a probationary year at his high post under Emperor Su-tsung sometime between 760–763 (that is to say, before Su-tsung's death and before Su-tsung's son, the new heir apparent, overturns the authority of both his empress mother and her chief eunuch, Li Fu-kuo); later, I-ssu retires, or for some reason he is dismissed from his office.

(H)

If we take the prefix *shih* to mean “by examination,” we are not required to imagine that I-ssu possessed the almost fantastic ability needed for a candidate from a dreary northern province to move directly into high-level palace work; nor are we required to accept the unlikelihood that a man so gifted would enter a high-level military career before he served at some other post first nor that he would then take an early retirement to live numerous years in nonfunctional obscurity.

Here a third possible story presents itself **(H_1)**: I-ssu wins his position as administrator in the final year of Hsuan-tsung’s reign by the usual means of candidacy and examination; while he serves his probationary year (*shih*), the rebellion breaks out; as a close associate of the emperor, and responsible for the transportation and accommodations of the emperor while he traveled, I-ssu follows the emperor’s entourage and guard to Ma-wei; there he witnesses the political assassination of the emperor’s consort; I-ssu travels with the emperor’s son to Ling-wu, where he receives his military commission under the new Emperor, Su-tsung. This third version of the story clearly embodies one sense of the military title attributed to I-ssu in the Inscription, where he is referred to as an *associate* military vice commander. The prefix *associate* (*tung*), when it does not indicate a shared authority, indicates that the holder of the title is temporarily serving his assignment at the same time that he holds another, usually higher, title. This third version also accounts for the immediacy with which I-ssu’s retirement is brought up in the Inscription. A fourth possible version **(H_2)** begins like the third, but includes long years of government service before I-ssu’s retirement to the monastery.

The characters or selves which I-ssu plays in his public life are the same in all four versions of the story: bishop,

warrior, high government official. Only the sequence and duration of these roles change. In one story, I-ssu wins a high position by great personal ability and learning according to the rite of imperial candidacy and examination; he lives the life of a noble for less than a year and the life of a warrior for four years; he retires early from government service, perhaps disillusioned, but with imperial gratitude for his service; he continues his existence for many years in a monastery temple. In the second version, I-ssu arrives as a learned but provincial monk; he serves a short time in palace service; during the rebellion, he wins enough renown as a military leader to recommend him later to high imperial office; he serves in that office for many years; later, he retires with gifts of imperial gratitude. The third and fourth stories share the thematic elements of the first and second versions. All four stories are possible. Only one is true. Without the gratuitous invention of extraordinary personal circumstances, only one accounts for I-ssu's lasting wealth, his quick rise to high station, and the show of imperial gratitude. The argument and plot of this story, more lively and more likely than the others, is the one followed in this narrative.

< PART 4C: COURT CIRCLES >

Can the Human Body Photosynthesize? Another Look

PHOTO:
bigthink.com

“Humans have to grow, hunt, and gather food, but many living things aren’t so constrained. Plants, algae and many species of bacteria can make their own sustenance through the process of photosynthesis. They harness sunlight to drive the chemical reactions in their bodies that produce sugars. Could humans ever do something similar? Could our bodies ever be altered to feed off the Sun’s energy in the same way as a plant?”

This is a question that a body of biologists have been investigating for the past year without knowledge of how the human body is already designed to accommodate light. The report provided through the link below reveals clearly the tendency of scientific thought to exteriorize the process of utilizing solar energy, limiting the discussion of the process in a literally superficial way, by investigating the skin alone, the surface area of the body, and not the eyes and nervous system.

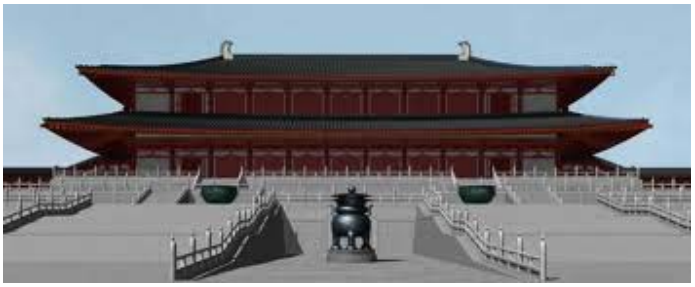
See for yourself. Read the full article “Will Humans Ever Photosynthesize?” at bbc.com.

Link submitted by Frieda Nelson

Mar Iazed-buzid, the Great Donor: Part 4A

PART 4: COURT CIRCLES

. . . Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon,
Associate Military Vice Commissioner of the Northern Region,
Director of the Palace Administration by examination . . .



Tang Dynasty Imperial Palace:

"The Red Court" Artist's conception

The final lines of the Inscription substantiate I-ssu’s illustrious existence in Chang-an imperial circles, but only the words of historians and chroniclers can substantiate the existence of those circles, and only the words of poets can substantiate their diminishing splendor. These I have read, not only to discover what is immediately apparent but also to draw out from their words (the only material I have to work with) the typical figures that will appear in this narrative. I have made no attempt to place them into I-ssu’s personal life, where his relationships can be only a matter of conjecture, but into those nodal zones that still can be remembered, where life merges with custom, institutions, and law; that is to say, his public life. Although there was some risk of getting lost in such a project, I have attempted to yield as much specific detail as possible.

"Traveling in Spring" Tang Dynasty painting by Zhan Kigian

Rivers and mountains survive broken countries. In spring, four months after the new emperor’s return, the city grew lush again. Su-tsung insisted that possession of the palace

signified restoration; defeat of the insurgents, he believed, was only a matter of time. On the fifth day of the second moon of the third revolution of Chih Te (759), while Kuo Tzu-i, and perhaps I-ssu with him, were awaiting their orders anxiously at Hsian-wei, Emperor Su-tsung changed the period name to Heavenly Origin (Chien Yuan), abandoned the term “revolution,” which his father had instated, and reintroduced the term “year”; and the ancestral temple burned down by An Lu-shan he restored. Five months later, Su-tsung sent off his fourteen-year-old daughter to become the bride of the *hui ho* qaghan to cement the alliance of their peoples. In the city, the people already looked down upon those whom they had praised as heroes only months before. Proverbially among the sons of Han, when an educated person visited the home of a lowly person, he was said to “brighten the room.” Now the educated southerners said the palace was “darkened” with the comings and goings of the sons of the Northern Regions, the *hui ho*, whose arrogance reached to the skies, who gashed their faces as an earnest of sincerity (and who smelled because they wrapped themselves in furs and gorged themselves with flesh food), who were overbearing to the last degree, and who, on top of everything, recently revived their custom of dashing across the frontier to seize the harvests of the sons of Han in high autumn when their barbarian horses were sleek and fat.

Uighur princesses Wall painting from Bezeklik caves

Uighur princes in robes and headress Wall painting from Bezeklik caves

Perhaps on one of those days after the emperor had recalled the war hero Kuo Tzu-i to sit at court in the capital, where he might be watched and not influence the events taking place on the frontier, the valiant-hearted duke rode out of the gates of the capital to weep alone by funereal trees. For him the rebellion in the north had stained the blue sky. His Dragon Sword cried out, yet he was left there idle to shake his sleeves and stroke his cross guard. Kuo Tzu-i knew that

the maze of women's gates and eunuch pavilions (*See* Supplement 1) around the jade towers of the Vermillion City prevented him from explaining to the emperor the gravity of the situation. On this day the visible symbol of the duke's high rank, the golden fish he wore on a chain from his waist, swung slowly to the gait of his horses, while the eunuch commanders, the powdered-lady generals, were riding under the fiery banners. He knew the iron horsemen of the Northeast could smell from afar the ornate arrows in their perfumed quivers when they called for their own metal lances; on the frontier, thoroughbreds were eating cold weeds, while the useless nags he saw row on row in the high-beamed palace stables were stuffing themselves on green grass and drinking white water.

Just as it is not certain whether I-ssu **(C)** had continued on to the East with Kuo Tzu-i in the autumn of 757, after the capital had been restored to Tang, neither is it certain whether I-ssu returned in 760 with the pacified commander or at some earlier or later date. But it is certain that when the Court returned to Chang-an, from that time forward, the physical facilities, personnel, and supply of the forbidden districts of the palace were entirely in the hands of eunuchs, and in these surroundings I-ssu learned the Confucian honor of service.

The phrasing of the Inscription, in combination with my ignorance of exact Tang usage, leaves me uncertain about I-ssu's life during the next several years. However, the phrasing leads me to believe that I-ssu **(E)** received his official honors and awards from Su-tsung, who reigned for only three years after the Tang restoration of the capital, until 763, and not **(F)** from Su-tsung's successor and son, Tai-tsung. The time frame of the events mentioned in the Inscription is vague. (Perhaps the vagueness is intentional, to avoid the embarrassment of mentioning I-ssu's many years of diligent but uninspiring government service. Delicacy requires that timeless official inscriptions praise only the extraordinary.)

The Inscription’s narrative sequence of events, as much by what it says as by what it does not, suggests Emperor Su-tsung’s high favor of I-ssu and the likelihood that I-ssu led the common life of an imperial noble for many years before he retired to monastic life.

Buddhist Diamond Sutra Tang Dynasty print

(E)

By the time I-ssu appeared in court circles to offer himself for government service, the shocks of repeated rebellion had begun to crack open the Tang social order, and powerful popular forces were already rushing in. The egalitarian traditions of the nomadic Eastern invaders had wedged in and countered the vigorous efforts of the northern aristocracy, the settled descendants of invaders from an earlier dynasty, to expand their political control. The emphatic compassion of the people was beginning to wash away the ruling sentiments that had marked them for ill treatment for centuries. The people, whose influence rose as the influence of their religion rose, now accepted gratefully the Buddhist offering of a secure and respectable status outside the established hierarchy, and in such great numbers that decades later the government would restrict the growth of religious

establishments. The civil service, by weakening the rigid shell of the traditional titled class through procedures of social engineering, allowed a fresh new respect for individual human dignity to emerge and ultimately to become the prominent characteristic of the age. Even Buddhist monasteries, through their social welfare program, educated promising young men in the Confucian classics so they might compete in the civil service examinations.

In this heartbreaking and melancholic age, a man of value who wished to dedicate himself to government service had only two paths open to him. Following one, a man became a candidate for years, seeking recruitment through a series of recommendations and examinations in a long and symbolical ritual of state. (*See* Supplement 2) I-ssu, like the ancestors of the northern elite who had founded the dynasty of Tang, took the other path: He rose swiftly through the ranks of military service to a generalship by his personal powers alone, (*See* Supplement 3) and when he entered civil service, the prestige of his rank transferred with him.

< PART 4B: COURT CIRCLES >

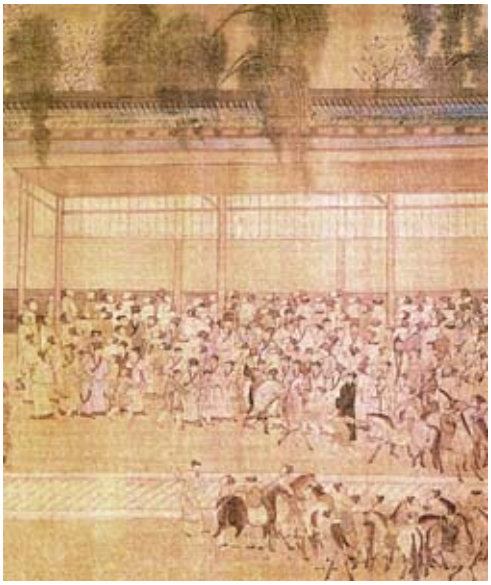
SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement 1:
The Rising Status of Li Fu-kuo

Empress Chang (Zhang)

At Ling-wu, money had been scarce; to pay the troops, the new government resorted to the fatal method of *mai kuan*, selling official ranks. To the great annoyance of the ministers, men of rank then mingled with undersecretaries, and eunuchs appeared in positions where no eunuchs should have been. At Ling-wu Emperor Su-tsung had recognized the talents of the eunuch Li Fu-kuo by making him chief administrator of the armies on campaign. Now Li Fu-kuo busied himself in affairs of state. By the time the imperial armies reached Feng-Hsiang, Lady Chang ruled the emperor, and the eunuch Li Fu-kuo had grown arrogant. When Li Fu-kuo assumed the duties of secretarial chief of staff in the palace at Chang-an, his personal status rose even higher.

Supplement 2:
The Ritual of Government Recruitment



Scholars wait for results of civil service exam. Handscroll attributed to Qiu Ling (c. 1530)

The ritual begins with a recommendation given by the official of the candidate's district and success on the district and provincial exams, continues with the recommendation of the prefect of his province and acceptance for study in the national university, and ends with the completion of one of the metropolitan degree examinations held each autumn at the capital. The highest degree was given for literary talent, the next for classical scholarship or one of the other less-esteemed degrees in law, calligraphy, or mathematics. Success in one of these selection examinations assigned a man an official status and a rank through the government's Ministry of Rites and qualified him for appointment through the government's Ministry of Personnel but guaranteed him nothing. Far more men prepared for examinations than passed, and far more became qualified than were ever employed. One in ten gained a government post; the others languished in the large pool of unemployed inside the capital, from which a few were drawn out now and then to be used in education or administration at the local level. A candidate might spend twenty years or more reaching the selection examination. Half

of those who succeeded were already gray-haired men.

Supplement 3:
Rising Through the Ranks of Military Service

The poet Tu Fu. Anonymous artist's conception.

The renowned poet Tu Fu, whose talents had been rewarded by the government with tedious posts and a minor rank, observed that, whereas study and the arts of peace should bring the most highly coveted awards, under the condition of strife, the ambitions of men are best realized by military success.

The Sun is the Central Heart

PHOTO: Stephan Fuelling

The psychic fair held at the Reno Convention Center on Saturday October 13 and Sunday October 14 provided a venue to use for outreach. The Right Reverend Sean Savoy presented a free workshop each of those days from 2:00 to 3:00 PM called "The Sun is the Central Heart." Here are some of the questions and comments proposed in the invitation and the advertisement:

> *How can we work with the light/energy of the Sun? How do we put ourselves in tune with higher intelligence and with our own spiritual self? We can activate our inner light and participate in cosmic Consciousness by working with solar techniques that allow us to transcend the physical dimension. Can you see your golden, fully charged light body? Can you experience its Consciousness? Learn how to start the process of activating your solar body and expanding yourself—the mind as well as the heart—for union with the cosmos.*
>
> *The Sun is the beating, living center of our solar system, and the connecting point between our personal spiritual natures and cosmic spiritual energy, also known as God-Consciousness. It is the Sun, the Christ Force, that mediates between humankind and God.*

Mar Iazed-buzid, the Great Donor: Part 3C

Portrait of Duke Kuo Tzu-i.
Unknown artist

Chang-an fell quickly. Problems arose when the spoils of the city promised to the *hui ho* were denied them. They were asked to continue on with the regular army to Lo-yang. The *hui ho* qaghan publicly embarrassed the Heir Apparent. In response, the Heir Apparent bribed him handsomely with the spoils of the eastern capital to soothe his feelings. (Here I-ssu might have somehow affected the negotiations, since he acted with them as lieutenant general.)

Three days after the invasion, the loyal troops were on the march toward the eastern capital. On their way out, the army defeated the rebels at what is now Shen-chou; their corpses

spread out over thirty *li*. One hundred thousand heads were collected. During the tenth moon, the imperial armies entered the eastern capital of Lo-yang and took it. Two Chinese divisions, one commanded by Kuo Tzu-i and the other by Li Kuang-pi, struck a frontal attack; the third, made of the *hui ho,* led by their qaghan, and perhaps assisted by I-ssu, took a roundabout route to surprise the rebels in the rear. The rebel army, led by An Lu-shan's son (and assassin), came out of the city against Kuo Tzu-i, and did well until the arrows of the *hui ho* fell on them from the rear and the *hui ho* themselves, with savage faces and loud, discordant cries, came at them on the run and panicked them, scaring them off. The *hui ho* were again dissatisfied. They had consented to the booty of Lo-yang instead of Chang-an, but too many who knew the hiding places as well as they had gone before them. Shu, the Heir Apparent, paid them off with one hundred thousand rolls of silk and sent them away with Kuo Tzu-i and I-ssu to battle at Chu-wo.

As he had promised, Su-tsung left Feng-hsiang for the capital on the nineteenth day of the tenth moon and entered the city on the twenty-third day. It is said that when the Emperor returned, great banners rejoiced, hanging rainbow clouds and fluttering phoenix tails, and drums rolled, thunder falling to earth, and for a thousand *li* the earth displayed no smoke from warning beacons to frighten the people. A few days later, the *hui ho* chief and his men returned from the east on their way back to the steppes. A feast of farewell was prepared for them in the Diffuse Government Hall, and gifts were promised.

Our ignorance of the details of I-ssu's life here again produces two possible courses of action for him. After the victory at Lo-yang, he might have either **(D)** returned to the western capital at Chang-an with the *hui ho* and accompanied the Emperor in the festivities, or **(C)** remained with Kuo Tzu-i at the eastern capital at Lo-yang.

(C)

If I-ssu remained with Kuo Tzu-i, these were his circumstances:

From the sixth moon of the first year of Chien-yuan to the seventh moon of the second year, the imperial army assembled in the east under order to wipe out the remainder of the hydra-headed rebel forces. Kuo Tzu-i was appointed, with eight others, to go east. (On the suggestion of a favored eunuch, Su-tsung divided power among the nine leaders in order to keep any one man from becoming too powerful.) At the head of two hundred thousand infantry and cavalry, the nine leaders were sent to assault the main rebel forces in the northern prefecture of Hsian-wei. The patricide son of An Lu-shan, who had come out of Lo-yang against them the year before, had fled there to the city of Yeh.

On the day before the battle, Kuo Tzu-i laid out his formations with three thousand skilled *hui ho* archers concealed inside a rampart. The next day, on approaching the progressive battle, Kuo Tzu-i signaled his lieutenant to feign flight. When the rebels pursued the retreating wing, the *hui ho* archers, who lay in hiding, simultaneously let arrows fly from their bows and transfixed their targets. The rebel forces collapsed. General Kuo ordered his forces to envelop the city and make firm their envelopment by building three rings of dirt walls and moats, with watchtowers. Then he brought in water to pour beneath the city walls and made the water level rise and fill the city wells to overflowing. In time, the people within the city began eating one another. A peck of rice brought over seventy thousand in cash. A single rat was valued at several thousand.

After five months, Shih Ssu-ming’s horde came to the aid of the patricide Ching-hsu. They fought the imperial army at their encampment and forced Kuo Tzu-i to retreat. (*See* Supplement 5) The defeated imperial army raised the siege and fled south. Kuo held his men together, retired across the Yellow River, and severed the Honan Bridge behind him to

defend Ku River. By the twelfth moon of 759, Kuo Tzu-i was headquartered in Lo-yang, the Eastern Capital. The Empire's one large offensive maneuver, led by Kuo Tzu-i, had been an utter fiasco.

Prospects for winning the war diminished as time passed. (*See* Supplement 6) Early in 756, Kuo Tzu-i's first northern command came to an end. After the attack of Shih Ssu-ming, and the disaster of a terrible storm, obliged Kuo Tzu-i to raise the siege at Yen-cheng and retire to Lo-yang, the Emperor replaced Kuo Tzu-i. (*See* Supplement 7) Now their was no unity of command. The spite of a eunuch, one of the imperious government of eunuchs that Su-tsung's reign had inadvertently created, relieved General Kuo of his duty at the most critical time in the nation's history, when it seemed that the Dynasty of Tang would give way to the new Dynasty of Yen.

< PART 4A: COURT CIRCLES >

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement 5:
The Payment of Ssu-ming

Three days later, the patricide Ching-hsu made a grateful visit to Ssu-ming. Ssu-ming repaid him by strangling him and his four brothers, then withdrew his forces to Fan-yang and assumed the throne of the Greater Yen Dynasty himself.

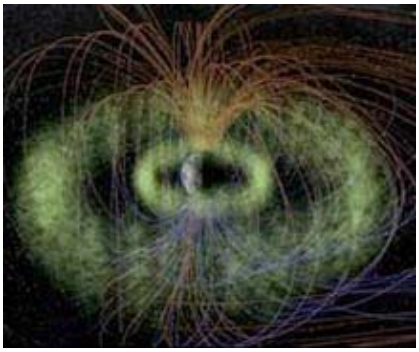
Supplement 6:
A Debilitating Government Strategy

The straightforward command structure established at Ling-wu had fallen apart as danger lessened. The generals did not follow orders from the Emperor’s son, who was an ineffective commander in chief, nor did they cooperate with one another. The government could not inspire them, and hard cash was getting scarce. The Court could not force their soldiers to be brave and resourceful, and civil officials became actively involved in military affairs. Influential eunuchs made matters worse. After 759 government strategy was confined to a static, debilitating defense.

Supplement 7:
A Note on the Death of Ssu-ming

Later that year rebels again took Lo-yang, and Shih Ssu-ming was killed by his own son with circumstances and excuses remarkably similar to those of the first patricide.

Plasmas Matter



Two giant donuts of charged particles called the Van Allen Belts surround Earth. PHOTO: NASA/T. Benesch, J. Carns

"Throughout the universe more than 99{1fa2ef75e2e78439128d99df03acfe1d8ee3047374abe3d4676fe3470ff8b909} of matter looks nothing like what's on earth. Instead of materials we can touch and see . . . most of the universe is governed by rules that react more obviously to such things as magnetic force or electric charge." <Read the entire article "Riding the Plasma Wave" online at sciencedaily.com. >

You may also want to read this article on the electric atmosphere as a companion to the article on plasma waves: < "The electric atmosphere: Plasma is next NASA science target." >

While some may believe this kind of discussion is a very specialized topic and not suitable for the general reader, Consociate Robert Anderson thinks it is worth looking into: "It's entirely possible that the quintessence, aether, is actually plasma, commonly called the fourth state of matter (after solid, liquid, and gas), although as plasma is the most abundant form of matter in the universe, it should perhaps be called the *first* state of matter. In the case of the Van Allen Belts described in this article, one has to ask, Why has it taken so long to explore these phenomena?" He suggests that

the electrical model of the universe has a more up-to-date understanding of plasma and that we check out the article < *Essential Guide to the EU, Chapter 3: Plasma* > online at thunderbolts.com.

Links provided by Frieda Nelson

Mar Iazed-buzid, the Great Donor: Part 3B

Chinese regulars. Detail from a Song Dynasty painting.

Early in the tenth moon of 756, before the bitter northwest wind of winter rose up form the Gobi, an imperial army rose up with orders from the Emperor to retake the capital; at Chen-tao Marsh, a site just west of Chang-an, the conventional forces of the imperial army under the command of Fang Kuan suffered disastrous defeat. Sometime later, news of the battle reached I-ssu at headquarters: the leader had imitated the

ancient war methods but without “the moment appointed by heaven.” His two thousand ox carts had been flanked by cavalry and infantry, and his chariots had given battle. But the rebels had let fly fire and burned the carts; the men and oxen were thrown into disorder. It was said that drums and bugles at first rang out their violence, cutting the heart; then, above the clash and cries of battle sounded weeping and wailing, the bitter cries of thousands of households and many fresh spirits of the dead; then a crystal sky, a panoramic waste; no dust, no sound of battle; forty thousand dead in a day. Grasslands and forests reeked with war dead. Homes in all ten prefectures had dead sons in armor, mixing water with their blood in the pools of Chen-tao Marsh.

In the capital, swarms of dusty *hu* battalions had returned to the city, their arrows washed in blood. After six months, they were still drinking the deep draughts of victory; drunk in the markets, they shouted *hu* songs. The citizens, in autumn grief, turned their faces north to mourn; the days, which they had spent conjuring their army’s presence, passed into hopeful nights; when they faced the dawn breaking, they faced dust and sand.

In the wintry twelfth moon at the opening of the year, Su-tsung moved from the center of Asia southward to Chang-an. Now, when the face of all northern China became restless and excitable, ruffled by the Gobi winds, rising high and taking to the air in dust storms that filled the world with the darkness of midnight at midday, the Dragon armies moved across the great yellow desert with the black breath of killing. On the hills was snow; on the rivers, ice. Horses drank from holes in mountains.

Following the path of the driven silt, I-ssu moved through walled-off frontier towns with the wind and the Dragon Emperor, namesake of the fabulous animal that controlled the elements. During the first moon of 757, Su-tsung and his army reached the town of Chi. By the second moon, they had reached

Feng-hsiang. There the Emperor held council to discuss methods for the speedy recovery of the two capitals.

In spring, emotions fit the season. At Chang-an, flowers brought a rush of tears. From the western mountains, teeming waters streamed on the armied hills. Beacon fires, the feathery signals of armies, overflowed the earth, burning incessantly, their black smoke rising high. The imperial standards, the Kingfisher Glory, massed near the Western Peak. Horns of battle wailed through the mountains and down streams; determined battle cries rang out anew; while in the city, far away, the people moaned. Then news arrived of An Lu-shan's death. The rebel leader had disappeared from the scene in the first moon when his eunuch – made so with a sword by An Lu-shan himself – pierced the corpulent abdomen of his master while he, already blinded and corrupted by disease, lay in bed, the victim of a plot constructed by his son to succeed him in the new dynasty of Yen.

During the seventh moon of 757, the Emperor Su-tsung, still enveloped in dust far from his capital, his heart given to indecision, one day ceased from drilling his soldiers. Then the tent used as Audience Hall was crowded with black official caps, and the coats of generals shined at the gates of the Outer Precinct. It was determined that the banners of the Son of Heaven would reenter Han Park through the winding hill paths. The army advanced in three grand divisions: Shu, the new Heir Apparent, led the vanguard; Kuo Tzu-i, with four thousand *hui ho* cavalry under the joint command of I-ssu and their chief, held the center; Wen Ssu-li, the rearguard.

On horseback, at the head of the cavalry beside the *hui ho* chief, I-ssu left the Court at Feng-hsiang and pushed eastward toward the capital. Chrysanthemums in the wind scattered autumn petals across the stones scarred by ancient war carts. Mountain berries were ripening to rich reds. After one hundred miles, the armies passed the Jade Blossom Palace – which had been built by Tai-tsung, the founder of Tang, to escape the

Chang-an summer heat – now in ruins. Beyond indifference in this time of grief, the clear river Wei flowed away alone. Along the roads, only desolation and loneliness. Hearth smoke was rare; no village untormented anywhere. Each evening, in the sunset light, distant flags and banners flared up and vanished, then jolted and climbed through foothills and cold hollows where the cavalries stopped for water. As each night fell across the rivers throughout these borderlands, drums and horns rehearsed war. In the eighth moon, the armor-clad back-country boys came to attack the town of Feng-hsiang; but repulsed, with great losses, they withdrew and made no more attempt to come west. Soon, garrison drums cut off peoples' travel. There was no mail, and the sound of the solitary wild goose announced the coming of the frontier autumn. During the ninth moon, some days before the battle, the armies crossed the now year-old battlefield of Chen-tao, where chilled white bones lay still, ill-used and forgotten. Then, like floating clouds, the symbol of restless wanderings, the imperial soldiers assembled on the hills surrounding Chang-an, while *hu* barbarians hid in the Capital City District. Through the long nights, painted longhorns from the army camp wailed mournfully to themselves. The beacon fires of neighboring garrisons smothered ridges and peaks. Miles apart, they were lit each night at the appointed time to signal that the garrisons were still there. For three months, frontier shadows became autumn nights. Perhaps on one of those nights someone recalled, or in a dream remembered, that the first Dragon Emperor of Han, traveling through the marshes, encountered a large snake across his path; fearless, he drew his sword and cut the snake in two.

On the morning of Ting-hai, the Day of the Pig, daybreak passed imperceptibly as the smoke of cooking fires rose over camped armies. The early morning drums and bugles of fifth watch sounded, stirring and sad. In the ice-cold sunrise watch, soldiers blocked the cold frontiers, pressing underfoot the glairy cliffs and deep ravines. Dawn sounded three drum

rolls of 333 beats, each followed by twelve blasts on the bugle. The imperial forces assembled. Princes and generals carried their symbols. Kuo Tzu-i, the Supreme Commissioner, with I-ssu, was to control the Leopard Strategy. The armies moved down in array and met the rebels northwest of Chang-an. In one day of fighting from dawn to dusk, the imperial army of Chinese regulars and *hui ho* cavalry, 150,000 strong, met 100,000 rebels. The 4,000 *hui ho* and their qaghan, Yeh-hu, distinguished themselves under Kuo's command. With I-ssu as joint commander, the4,000 formed the spearhead of the attack. Mounted and standing in their stirrups, which they had introduced from the steppes, they waved arrogant, long spears and short spears polished to the color of snow. They dashed forward with the speed of a passing arrow, keen as falcons who longed to destroy the enemy; their two-edged swords slashing, they dyed their clothes in blood. In the end, sixty thousand rebels were beheaded that day, their bandit torsos piled in heaps. Blood ran freely; rivers and streams reddened. Grass and shrubs stank of death. The commander of Yen fled to the east. Women and children mingled cries of grief. (*See* Supplement 4) With flying colors, the royal army marched into the capital. On the first day of the tenth moon, the Day of the Snake, Su-tsung issued a decree to announce the recovery of Chang-an and declared that he would return to the capital on the nineteenth day to take possession of the palace.

< READ PART 3C: THE JADE TENT >

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement 4:
The Chang-an Poems of Tu Fu

The poet Tu Fu. Anonymous artist's conception.

Three poems of Tu Fu, collected under the title *Return to Chang-an* (volume iv, folio 6), would no doubt supply further detail on the imperial strategy and the slaughter that I-ssu, in the spirit of war, assisted to generate; but the poems are as yet untranslated into English and so are unavailable to me.

Gustaf Stromberg in the Sun

Gustaf Stromberg characteristically greeting

the sunrise in his garden in 1961. PHOTO: websyte.com

Gustaf Stromberg was in the sun! This may be no great surprise to most members of our Community. But now we can actually witness Stromberg's reverent and vital relationship with the sun. Take a look at the adjacent photo. (It is the sixth photo down on the web page created by Alan Anderson in 2000 and dedicated to Gustaf Stromberg. <Visit the web page.>)

If you read through the website carefully, you will find there are a lot of facts that point up his spiritual involvements and love of life that are not generally known. Did you know that Albert Einstein said of Stromberg's book *Soul of the Universe*: "Very few men could of their own knowledge present the material as clearly and concisely as he has succeeded in doing"? Or that Stromberg followed C.G. Bennett's concept of a five-dimensional universe, the fifth axis of which he called the "Eternity Domain"? Or that his thinking drew on the electrodynamic theory of life propounded by Burr and Northrop? Or that Stromberg was a regular contributor to *Science of Mind* magazine? Or that Stromberg authored several lessons for the nonprofit religious organization called the Astara Foundation?

Link submitted by Robert Petrovich