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Paul Jakov Smith

Haverford College

Shen-tsung's ascension and the crisis of the mid-eleventh century

The nature of the mid-century crisis

In 1067 the nineteen-year old Chao Hsü (1048-1085) ascended the throne with an acute sense of shame at his country's foreign humiliations and a fierce ambition to redress the crises that had come to beset his empire.¹ Shen-tsung and his ministers had many reasons to feel uncertain, for the death of his father Ying-tsung (r. 1064-1067) after only three and a half years on the throne could only be taken as a bad omen. But the sense of crisis that pervaded Shen-tsung's empire had been brewing throughout Jen-tsung's reign (1023-1063), ever since the Sino-Tangut war of 1038-1044 had exposed troubling weaknesses in the fundamental pillars of the dynastic system itself -- the military, the financial system, and the bureaucracy.

¹ Shen-tsung's reign and the New Policies spearheaded by his chief minister, Wang An-shih, have inspired a vast and growing literature. For background information and a guide to the sources, the first places to go are the two encyclopedic works by Higashi Ichio: O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻ no kenkyu⁻ (Tokyo, 1970), and O⁻ Anseki jiten (Tokyo, 1980). Three of the most useful interpretations are Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa (Shanghai, 1959; republished 1979); James T.C. Liu, Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021-1086) and his New Policies (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); and Wang Tseng-yü, "Wang An-shih pien-fa chien-lun," Chung-kuo she-hui k'e-hsüeh, 3 (1980), pp. 131-54, which set off a wave of revisionist critiques of the New Policies in China. For a recent biography of Shen-tsung see Chung Wei-min, Sung Shen-tsung (Chi-lin, 1997).

The most important primary source for Shen-tsung's reign is Li T'ao's Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien (hereafter HCP), which supplements the official record with a rich array of diaries, memoirs, and unofficial histories, many of them no longer extant. The punctuated edition (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1986) is supplemented by the Shanghai Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she reprint (1986) of the now standard 1881 edition. Because the Ch'ang-pien chapters for the period 1067.2 through 1070.3 have been lost, the first three years of Shen-tsung's reign must be reconstructed from the Southern Sung historian Yang Chung-liang's Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo (hereafter CPPM, Taipei, Sung-shih tzu-liao ts'ui-pien, 2nd series, 1967), which has been rearranged (along with many other sources) into chronological order by Ch'in Hsiang-yeh, et al., Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien shih-pu (hereafter HCP shih-pu), published as volume five of the Shanghai Ku-chieh ch'u-pan she edition. In addition to the Ch'ang-pien, this chapter relies primarily on the Sung hui-yao chi-pen (hereafter SHY, Taipei, Shih-chieh shu-chü ed, 1964) and T'o T'o, et al., Sung-shih (hereafter SS, Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü ed., 1977).

The four-year war with the Tangut Hsi Hsia had demonstrated that the Sung's mercenary armies were unfit for active combat. Although the Sung mustered some 1.25 million men against 826,000 Tangut troops, the aged and inexperienced Sung soldiers, hired from among the flotsam of the marketplace, were likely to scatter at their first sight of a Tangut soldier. The war confirmed the status of the Tangut state as a major Asian power, even as the cessation of hostilities exacerbated defensive pressures on the Sung as just one of several players in a multistate geopolitical setting. With the Tanguts solidly entrenched in the Ordos, and the Khitan Liao sitting implacably along the northern borders of Ho-tung and Ho-pei, Sung ministers saw little short-term alternative to maintaining their huge if unreliable standing armies in the north. Efforts were made to pare the size of the regular, imperial troops, but by the mid-1060s the court still had 1,162,000 million men on the rolls, half of whom (663,000) were costly imperial troops.²

Of course the war had exacted an enormous toll on the Sung state, which was in turn forced to raise taxes by fifty percent in the three northern circuits of Shan-hsi, Ho-pei, and Ho-tung in order to meet emergency needs.³ But what dismayed contemporary observers even more was that the end of the war brought no financial relief. The need to pay, outfit, and provision troops stationed along the resource-poor northern frontier forced the Sung state to dig ever deeper into the commercial and agrarian economies, transforming the Sung fisc into what the historian Sogabe Shizuo has referred to as a perpetual "wartime economy."⁴ As routine defense costs absorbed an increasing portion of the state's income, official efforts to generate more revenues undermined trade in the state's two most important monopolized commodities, tea and salt. Yet even so it was impossible to keep up with the costs of a cumbersome but ineffective system of defense:

² On the origins and characteristics of the Sung's troops during the war see SS, 187, p. 4574; on the war itself see Wu T'ien-ch'ih, Hsi Hsia shih-kaō (Chengdu, 1981), pp. 59-68; Li Hua-jui, Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih (Shih-chia-chuang, 1998), pp. 40-57; Feng Tung-li and Mao Yüan-yu, Pei-Sung/Liao/Hsia chün-shih shih (Beijing, 1998), pp. 248-261; and Ruth Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds., Alien Regimes and Border States 907-1368, Vol. 6 of The Cambridge History of China (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 154-205. Wang Tseng-yü discusses the weaknesses of the Sung armies in the mid-eleventh century in Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an (Peking, 1983), pp. 90-5; for a contemporary assessment see Su Ch'e, "Shang huang-ti shu," Luan-ch'eng chi (SPPY ed.) 21, pp. 7b-10a.

³ Expenditures in the three northern circuits rose from 42.3 million to 72.1 million mixed units between 1038 and 1043, forcing an increase in taxes from 50.3 to 73.1 million units. See HCP, 140, p. 3366.

⁴ See Sogabe Shizuo, So dai zaiseishi (Tokyo, 1941), p. 3. The most frequently cited contemporary analysis of the impact of war on the mid-century Sung economy is by the two-term Finance Commissioner Chang Fang-P'ing (1007-1091) in his memorial "Lun kuo-chi ch'u-na shih," Le-ch'uan chi (SKCS ed.), 23, pp. 2b-5a.

by 1065 defense expenditures consumed fifty of the state's sixty million strings of cash income -- 83 percent -- while the government registered its first overall financial deficit.⁵

Defense was not the only budgetary item that had swelled out of control by mid century. The state's financial capacity was also stretched thin by what contemporaries called the problem of jung-kuan, supernumerary officials. The numbers of men with ranked civil service status (including civil and military officials) almost tripled during the reigns of Chen-tsung (998-1022), Jen-tsung, and Ying-tsung, from 9,785 to roughly 24,000 individuals. All of these men drew salaries commensurate with their civil-service rank, or stipendiary grade (chi-lu kuan), even if they held no active post (ch'ai-ch'ien). And starting sometime during Chen-tsung's reign the number of ranked civil servants increased well beyond the number of available posts, a trend that only continued to worsen. This glut of officials had at least two unfavorable consequences: in order to maintain a large enough candidate pool to ensure elite loyalty to the dynasty and at least a minimum flow of new blood into government, the state had to pay men for whom it had no jobs. This resulted in a large, though unspecified, financial burden. But poor career prospects and the long waiting period between posts undermined the morale of the civil service, especially the majority of civil servants in the junior or executory (hsüan-jen) division. The professional spirit of these men could erode if they were kept too long in lowly provincial posts or forced to go without posts altogether. Yet the court had to be wary of promoting too many junior men to the much smaller senior, or administrative division (ching-ch'ao kuan) -- the critical kai-kuan promotion -- where appropriate posts were even rarer. By the 1040s the problem of job competition and underemployment had expanded beyond the executory division into the upper reaches of the administrative class as well, using powerful members of the bureaucracy to unduly manipulate the personnel system to favor their relatives and proteges.⁶

Responses to the mid-century crisis

⁵ For a recent survey of the secular increase in taxes that began in Jen-tsung's reign see Ch'i Hsia, Sung-tai ching-chi shih (Shanghai, 1987), Vol. 1, pp. 393-410. Shiba Yoshinobu discusses military spending in "So²-dai shiteki seido no enkaku," in Aoyama Hakushi koki kinen So²-dai ronso² (Tokyo, 1974). Ch'eng Min-sheng disputes the standard interpretation that the figures preserved in SS, 179, pp. 4353 for 1065 demonstrate a chronic fiscal deficit in "Lun Pei-Sung ts'ai-cheng te t'e-tien yü chi-p'in te chia-hsiang," Chung-kuo-shih yen-chiu, 3 (1984), pp. 33-34. These doubts are amplified by Xiao-bin Ji in his "Pei Sung chi-p'in hsin-chieh -- shih-lun 'kuo-yung pu-tsu' yü Wang An-shih hsin-fa chih cheng," in Chih-p'ing Chou and Willard Peterson, eds., Kuo-shih fu hai k'ai-hsin lu -- Yü Yingshi chiao-shou jung-t'uei lun-wen chi (Taipei, 2002), pp. 283-300.

⁶ On the reasons for and problems spawned by the growth of the Sung civil service see Furugaki Koichi, "So²-dai no kanryo² su ni tsuite," in So²-dai shi kenkyu² kai, ed., So²-dai shakai to shu²-kyo² (Tokyo, 1985), pp. 121-158; Winston Lo, An Introduction to the Civil Service of Sung China: With Emphasis on its Personnel Administration (Honolulu, 1987), esp. pp. 60-2 and 158-65; and Umehara Kaoru, So²-dai kanryo² seido kenkyu² (Kyoto, 1985), esp. ch. 1 and pp. 249-66.

The Sino-Tangut debacle forced leading thinkers to reevaluate the state of Sung rule eighty years after the founding, and prompted the first major reform movement of the dynasty, the Ch'ing-li reforms of 1043 to 1045. Under the leadership of Fan Chung-yen (989-1052) the reform partisans insisted that the only way to reverse the military deterioration that the war had exposed was to undertake a comprehensive campaign to dismantle privilege and promote efficiency in the bureaucracy, rejuvenate the agrarian economy, and revive peasant participation in national defense.⁷ But, as documented in the previous chapter, in little more than a year the Ch'ing-li reform movement was abruptly suppressed, after highly placed opponents convinced Jen-tsung that the reform faction under Fan, Fu Pi (1004-1083), and Han Ch'i (1008-1075) constituted a threat to both imperial power and well-entrenched bureaucratic interests. Indeed it was the failure of the Ch'ing-li reforms that paved the way for the more radical reforms of Shen-tsung's reign, for despite Jen-tsung's volte-face public-spirited men grew increasingly uneasy. Or so at least the Yüan-yü partisan Liu An-shih (1048-1125) thought, as he tried to account for Shen-tsung's reforms to his student Ma Yung-ch'ing (chin-shih 1109). Relating what he must have learned from his own teacher Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086), Liu explained that "Between the time of the founders, who ruled the world with loyalty and benevolence, and the end of the Chia-yü era (1056-1063), the affairs of the world appeared to unravel, and all were dispirited and lackluster. The scholarly elite (shih-ta-fu) of the time deplored this state of affairs, and many of them wrote about it."⁸ It was in this very period, in 1058, that Wang An-shih (1021-1086) submitted his manifesto for achieving dynastic greatness through comprehensive reform, the so-called "Myriad word memorial;" three years later Ssu-ma Kuang followed with a set of memorials that offered an alternative approach to the problems of the day, rooted in prudence and a conservative eschewal of adventurism.⁹ Nevertheless, despite heated debate about the problems of the day, it was impossible to undertake major initiatives without an emperor dedicated to change, and Jen-tsung no longer was. Some efforts were made at the top to tinker with those fiscal and military institutions that were dangerously close to collapsing, such as the

⁷ See James T.C. Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in John K. Fairbank, ed., Chinese Thought and Institutions (Chicago, 1957), pp. 105-31. For Fan's ten-point call for reform, issued in 1043, see Fan wen-cheng-kung cheng-fu tsou-yi (SPTK ed.), shang, pp. 176-182. The text is reproduced in substantially complete form in HCP, 143, pp. 3431-44.

⁸ Ma Yung-ch'ing, Yüan-ch'eng yü-lu, quoted in Ch'ia Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, p. 63. Ch'ia Hsia discusses the political responses to the mid-century crisis on pp. 57-97. For a sense of the intellectual ferment of these times see Peter K. Bol, "This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China" (Stanford, 1992), ch. 6.

⁹ Wang's memorial, "Shang Jen-tsung huang-ti yen-shih shu," in Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi (Taipei, 1966), 39, pp. 217-27, is discussed more fully below. For Ssu-ma's "Five Guidelines," see Ssu-ma wen-cheng-kung ch'uan-jia chi (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu ed., Shanghai, 1935; hereafter SMWC), 21, pp. 307-14, analysed in Bol, "This Culture", pp. 220-1.

tea and salt monopolies and the cavalry horse procurement system.¹⁰ But the really significant reforms in the post-Ch'ing-li era were initiated by local and provincial officials to address problems faced by the people of their own jurisdictions. These localized measures included at least two pre-harvest loan measures, one of them by the magistrate of Yin-hsien County (Liang-che, mod. Ningpo), Wang An-shih; a service exemption fee for supply masters (ya-ch'ien); and two prototypical mutual security systems (pao-chia) established by local administrators to quell banditry in Ts'ai-chou and K'ai-feng.¹¹ Although without imperial support none of these experiments spread very far, they all served as precedents and prototypes for the New Policies (hsin-fa) promulgated under Shen-tsung's reign.

What Shen-tsung faced

When Jen-tsung died with no male heir in 1063, his nephew Chao Shu was elevated to the throne at age 31. Although contemporaries such as Tseng Kung (1019-1083) thought the new emperor Ying-tsung was eager for change and reform, his short reign was so paralysed by factionalism and an acrimonious ritual controversy that little was accomplished.¹² Thus when Ying-tsung abruptly died in the first month of the new lunar year (1067) his nineteen-year-old son Chao Hsü inherited all the problems that had bedeviled the Ch'ing-li reformers, but in even more intensified form.

On the financial front, the imperial coffers were still empty from the huge costs of Jen-tsung's interment, and now another imperial funeral impended. Although the young emperor ordered that expenditures on his father be kept to one third the costs of Jen-tsung's funeral, chief councilor Han Ch'i was still forced to borrow 300,000 strings of cash from the Inner Treasury and to conscript into service 35,000 laborers and 4,000 stone-masons.¹³ More fundamentally, official morale seemed to be at a nadir as the

¹⁰ See, for example, Saeki Tomi, "So-sho ni okeru cha no sembai seido," in his Chu-goku shi kenkyu, (Kyoto, 1969), Vol. 1, pp. 377-408; Tai I-hsuan, Sung-tai ch'ao-yen chih-tu yen-chiu (Shanghai, 1957); and Paul J. Smith, Taxing Heaven's Storehouse: Horses, Bureaucrats, and the Destruction of the Sichuan Tea Industry, 1074-1224 (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), ch. 1.

¹¹ For these and additional examples of reforms initiated locally between the late 1040s and early 1060s see Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, pp. 67-70.

¹² On the ritual dispute over whom Ying-tsung should call his father, see Bol, "This Culture", p. 213, citing Carney T. Fisher, "The Ritual Dispute of Sung Ying-tsung," Papers in Far Eastern History, 36 (1987), pp. 109-38; and James T. C. Liu, Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh Century Neo-Confucianist (Stanford, 1967), pp. 76-9. For Ying-tsung's abortive "activism" (chih tsai yu-wei) see Tseng Kung, Yüan-feng lei-kao (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu ed., Taipei, 1968), 30, p. 330, cited, among other examples, by Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, p. 96

¹³ HCP, 209, pp. 5074-6.

surplus of officials began to affect the entire civil service. Many commentators lamented that the glut of executory grade officials had worsened over the years, with far more men than the system could absorb clamoring for posts, sponsors and promotion to senior, administrative status.¹⁴ And now the need to accommodate the demands of junior men had also produced a surfeit of administrative grade officials: in 1068 a censor complained that there were ten times more administrative grade officials than there had been under the first two emperors, forcing the Bureau of Personnel Evaluation (shen-kuan-yüan) to furlough senior as well as junior grade officials.¹⁵ Moreover, according to the great scholar Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072), the choicest senior-level positions -- those in the Three Institutes (san-kuan, of History, Literature, and Worthies), the training ground for future chief councilors -- were no longer assigned to the most talented chin-shih graduates, but rather to those men with technical experience in finance, law, and defense. As Ou-yang saw it, learning and good reputation no longer mattered, leaving the most steadfast members of the civil service dispirited.¹⁶

But perhaps the most immediately troubling problem inherited by the new emperor was the growing aggressiveness of the Tanguts under Liang-tso (r. 1048-1067), son and successor of the Tangut state-builder Li Yüan-hao (r. 1032-1048). Liang-tso's ambitions were aided and inspired by the political deterioration of the Tibetan federation in the Kansu -- Ch'ing-hai borderlands that had long been the Sung's only northern ally. Disaffected tribal leaders occupying the vulnerable northwestern perimeter of the Lung-hsi basin that divided the Tanguts, the Sung, and the Ch'ing-hai federation had begun defecting to the Hsi Hsia side from the late 1050s on, encouraging the Tanguts to launch an expansionist campaign throughout the unstable border region. Starting in 1063 the Tanguts repeatedly sent large expeditionary forces against Tibetan tribal capitals, against the sinified border tribes, and in 1066 against Chinese commanderies themselves. These Tangut probes presented an immediate threat to the always fragile Sung horse-supply system, but in the long term they threatened the Sung state itself. Ying-tsung's chief ministers had been confused about how to deal with Liang-tso and the Tanguts, and could still not agree on a plan to present to Shen-tsung.¹⁷

Shen-tsung and the old guard

Shen-tsung, however, had his own ideas about what needed to be done, for he saw himself as the heir to the founders' dreams of recovering the sixteen "Yen-Yün" prefectures occupied by the Khitan Liao in the north, and the Ordos prefecture of Ling-chou lost to the Tanguts in 1001. He came to the throne "determined to wipe away

¹⁴ HCP, 208, pp. 5052, 5058-60.

¹⁵ HCP shih-pu, 3 shang, pp. 11b-12a.

¹⁶ HCP, 208, pp. 5064-5.

¹⁷ See SS, 485, p. 14002; 492, p. 14162; and HCP, 208, pp. 5067-5068. For a discussion and sources see Smith, Taxing Heaven's Storehouse, p. 43.

generations of shame" not by relying on conciliation and passive defense, as had every predecessor since T'ai-tsung (977-997), but by redefining the political map through conquest and expansion.¹⁸ This irredentist dream also shaped Shen-tsung's attitude towards his empire's fiscal crisis: very simply, the state needed riches to finance its wars, for as Shen-tsung told his war minister Wen Yen-po (1006-1097), "if we are to raise troops for our frontier campaigns, then our treasuries must be full."¹⁹ And finally, Shen-tsung's ambitions were animated by a vision of himself as an activist, hands-on ruler. Although it was not until Wang An-shih's ouster in 1076 that Shen-tsung took direct control of the affairs of state, he ascended the throne with an expansive sense of imperial power and an abiding dissatisfaction with the absolutist powers built up over the years by the great ministers -- particularly Han Ch'i, still in the chief councilor's office he had held under the last two emperors.²⁰

Shen-tsung had reason to expect an enthusiastic response to his goals from his leading officials, since many of them had spearheaded the reform movement of 1043. But time and prominence had dulled their edge, and many of the emperor's "venerables" (yüan-lao) had turned conservative. Chu Hsi (1130-1200) stressed this point to his students a century later, commenting that when such men as Han Ch'i and Fu Pi (1004-1083) came to power again following the failure of the Ch'ing-li reforms, "they had forgotten [the excitement of] those early days. Master Fu was afraid of acting, and wanted only to read the classics and recite Buddhist sutras."²¹ Fu Pi, who "knew the emperor was devoted to activism (yu-wei)," made a special point of counseling restraint at every opportunity, especially on matters of war. When in 1068 the emperor asked him about border affairs, Fu replied that "Your majesty has not been [on the throne] for very long; it would be best if you spread virtue and act benevolently, and not speak of war for twenty years."²²

Fu Pi's homily was not especially useful at a time when the country was drifting into a war with the Tanguts, and Shen-tsung received it in "stony silence." But Fu was hardly alone in resisting the emperor's desire to confront the Tanguts. In 1066, after three years of Tangut attacks on Chinese surrogates and military installations, the Shan-hsi Fiscal Intendant Hsüeh Hsiang had sent up a comprehensive plan for border defense that emphasized setting Tangut surrogates against their masters. In mid-1067 Hsüeh's plan assumed greater urgency when the border official Ch'ung O kidnapped Tangut general Weii-ming Shan and his followers, unleashing an escalating spiral of violence punctuated

¹⁸ SS, 16, p. 314.

¹⁹ Ma Tuan-lin, Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao (Shih-t'ung ed., Taipei, 1963, hereafter WHTK), 24, p. 232c.

²⁰ HCP shih-pu, 1, p. 2a.

²¹ Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu yü-lei, p. 129, cited in Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, p. 97.

²² SS, 313, p. 10255.

by the Tangut execution of a Sung emissary and Ch'ung O's walling of the Tangut town of Sui-chou (Shan-hsi, renamed Sui-te-chün).²³ All agreed that Ch'ung O had acted without authorization, but Shen-tsung dismissed calls that he and Hsüeh Hsiang be punished to placate the Tanguts and bring the matter to an end.²⁴ For Shen-tsung was desperate to launch an offensive campaign, and the Ch'ung O fiasco was all he had. Perhaps for this reason he was especially incensed by a memorial that his new chief censor Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086) sent up in the 9th month of 1067. Although Ssu-ma allowed that the emperor's desire to recover the territories of the Kansu corridor [held by the Uighurs and Tibetans], the Ordos [held by the Tanguts], and the sixteen prefectures held by the Khitan were laudable goals, they could not be achieved by Ch'ung O's policy of turning Liang-tso's allies against the Tanguts. First of all, insisted Ssu-ma, since the Chinese people were by nature and livelihood ill-equipped to do battle with the war-loving barbarians, the only sage policy was to seek a stable border through diplomacy and compliance -- literally by embracing them and being soft (*huai-jou*). Every Sung emperor who pursued an offensive policy against the Tanguts, such as T'ai-tsung in 1001 and Jen-tsung in the 1040s, saw his troops cut down in battle, his people killed off by the exhaustion of transport duty, and his coffers emptied by war and the annual bounties paid to the barbarian victors. Second, although Liang-tso may have transgressed from time to time he never openly cut off relations with the Sung; he still called himself "vassal" (*ch'en*). Thus from a diplomatic standpoint it would be humiliating to break faith with a vassal by suborning his ministers. And finally, if the destabilizing plan failed and the country found itself in an outright war with the Tanguts, its resources would be stretched beyond capacity, for the Sung was not at all ready for war. On the contrary, stressed Ssu-ma, to the extent that the emperor's revanchist goals were at all laudable, they could only be realized after a thorough revamping of the imperial bureaucracy, the fiscal system, the army command structure, the system of military recruitment and training, and the arsenal. Since none of these had been attended to, to go on the offensive prematurely could only lead to disaster.²⁵

Because of their antipathy towards offensive war, Shen-tsung's early advisors were also lukewarm about creating a national war-chest. Although all agreed that the nation was in the midst of a financial crisis, they continued the tradition of icting irresponsible spending for impoverishing the people and the state, and proposed cost-cutting measures that were more appropriate for a minimalist approach to government

²³ Ch'ung O had bribed Wei-ming Shan's younger brother into turning Mingshan, and then preemptively kidnapped Mingshan when it looked like the plan was unraveling. See *CPPM*, 83, pp. 2627-2639, and the useful synopsis in Pi Yüan's late-eighteenth century reconstruction of the Sung and Yüan chronicles, the *Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (Shanghai, 1979, hereafter *HTC*), 65, p. 1609.

²⁴ *HCP shih-pu*, 2, pp. 18b-21a.

²⁵ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Lun Heng-shan shu," *SMWC*, 41, pp. 525-529. Shen-tsung fumed about Ssu-ma's memorial to his War Minister, Wen Yen-po, and demanded to know how Ssu-ma knew about the deliberations in the first place. See *HCP shih-pu*, 2, p. 7b.

than to the activist ambitions harbored by the new emperor. Early in 1067, for example, Chang Fang-p'ing urged that the emperor first reduce the size of his armies, and then seek to cut costs in the imperial household and the bureaucracy by eradicating everything that conflicted with "plainness and simplicity."²⁶ A year later Ssu-ma Kuang declined a post in the new Office of Economizing (*ts'ai-chien chü*), which he thought was itself a wasteful bureaucratic accretion, by admonishing the emperor that "the current deficits in the national treasury have been caused by wasteful administrative expenditures, unrestrained bestowal of emoluments and rewards (attendant on the deaths of two emperors in four years), an overly lavish imperial household, a bloated bureaucracy, and an inefficient army." Ssu-ma cautioned that reducing expenditures had to be a long term project, and wondered why it could not be assigned to the Finance Commission, rather than to yet another wasteful office. Although Shen-tsung did dutifully institute a campaign to trim expenses in the imperial household, despite Ssu-ma's advice he declined to dismantle the new cost-cutting agency.²⁷

But the issue that most provoked Shen-tsung's dissatisfaction with his elder statesmen was not war or finance, but the scope of monarchical power. Within months of Shen-tsung's accession prominent officials sought to curtail the new emperor's ambition to initiate and direct reforms from the throne, and to press on him the importance of leaving the management of affairs of state to his bureaucracy. In a memorial of 1067.2 the Academician Han Wei (1017-1098) begged Shen-tsung not to intervene directly in the governing process: "The hundred affairs of government each have their appropriate officials, who exercise their utmost skills to fulfill their duties. There can be no greater sacrifice of the essence of government than for the monarch to take over from his officials in the management of affairs." Han Wei urged Shen-tsung to confine his decision-making to only the most important issues, and only when his officials were stalemated; and above all he stressed that the ruler could not hasten to do great things, but must proceed systematically and with great caution.²⁸ As Anthony Sariti has argued, it was Ssu-ma Kuang who most forcefully argued that the emperor should act as a final arbiter who stood aloof -- and sequestered -- from the actual process of bureaucratic decision making.²⁹ Two months after Han Wei's memorial Ssu-ma Kuang inaugurated his appointment as chief censor by urging Shen-tsung to eschew "the many bothersome details of government" in favor of first rectifying his own heart (*hsiu-hsin*), and then

²⁶ HCP, 209, p. 5091

²⁷ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ts'u-mien ts'ai-chien kuo-yung cha-tzu," in SMWC, 42, pp. 533-5, and WHTK, 24, p. 232c.

²⁸ HCP, 209, p. 5077.

²⁹ See Anthony William Sariti, "Monarchy, Bureaucracy, and Absolutism in the Political Thought of Ssu-ma Kuang," Journal of Asian Studies 32, No. 1 (November 1972), pp. 53-76.

selecting and motivating the best men to govern the nation (chih-kuo).³⁰ It was just this division between imperial and bureaucratic spheres of influence that Shen-tsung was disinclined to honor, however, and four months later Ssu-ma Kuang was forced to complain that the emperor was interfering in the normal process of government by sending out his own agents (nei-ch'en) to investigate affairs and line officials in the field.³¹

It must be stressed that although Shen-tsung did not get the encouragement he wanted from such men as Fu Pi and Ssu-ma Kuang, he did not on that account want them out of his way. On the contrary, he continued to value the opinions of the most fervent critics of his revanchist, reforming ambitions, and sought to keep them by his side. Shen-tsung kept Fu Pi in the capital until 1072 despite the old man's opposition to change, for example, because he felt that Fu Pi's "prominence helped to hold together all under heaven."³² And Ssu-ma Kuang remained Shen-tsung's closest confidante -- perhaps even closer intellectually than Wang An-shih -- despite his intransigent opposition to every facet of the emperor's reform agenda. For as Shen-tsung told Lü Kung-chu (1018-1081) in 1067.10, "I want Ssu-ma Kuang by my side not for his opinions on affairs of state (for as they both agreed Ssu-ma, like Wang An-shih, was rather impractical) but because of his moral power (tao-te) and learning."³³

Thus it was not simply over ideas about how to rule that Shen-tsung turned away from the leading mid-century intellectuals to Wang An-shih, but also because of politics. Most importantly, Shen-tsung resented what he perceived as the autocratic powers built up over three reigns by his chief councilor Han Ch'i. Shen-tsung's resentment was fanned by his former tutor Wang T'ao (1020-1080), who repeatedly charged that "since the end of the Chia-yu era (1057-1063) Han Ch'i has monopolized the handles of government,

³⁰ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'u ch'u chung-ch'eng shang-tien cha-tsu," in SMWC, 38, pp. 493-4 and HCP shih-pu, 1, pp. 9b-10a. Sariti translates the first part of Ssu-ma's injunction on p. 62.

³¹ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Yen Wang Chung-cheng ti erh cha-tzu," in SMWC, 39, p. 511 and HCP shih-pu, 2, pp. 1a-2b. Anthony Sariti is right to conclude (contra James T. C. Liu) that this question of the delegation of authority to the bureaucracy does not serve to distinguish between conservatives and reformers. Wang An-shih made many of the same arguments as Han Wei and Ssu-ma Kuang once he was in power. The dividing line comes over what kind of power (extractive and entrepreneurial versus ameliorative and advocatory) and to what kinds of officials (special-function fiscal agents versus regular line officials).

³² HCP, 231, pp. 5614-16, citing the Yeh-shih of Lin Hsi (ca. 1035 - ca. 1101), compiler in the mid-1090s of the Veritable Records of Shen-tsung's reign. For capsule biographies of Lin and many of the individuals mentioned in this chapter, see the Chung-kuo li-shih ta tz'u-tien: Sung-shih (Shanghai, 1984).

³³ HCP shih-pu, 2, pp. 13a-15b.

with the result that the monarch's position is weak and the minister's position is strong." Starting in the third month of 1067 Wang T'ao used his post as head of the censorate to launch an impeachment campaign against Han Ch'i and his co-councilor Tseng Kung-liang (998-1078) for taking advantage of a new emperor to violate the rules of office protocol. Shen-tsung himself quashed the impeachment process, but a political free-for-all between Wang T'ao and the assistant civil councilor Wu K'uei (1010-1067) ensued that revived the factional animosities of the 1060s and undermined the power of the old leadership. On the one hand Han Ch'i, seriously compromised by Wang T'ao's attacks and the public perception of Shen-tsung's displeasure with him, repeatedly begged permission to resign his post. On the other hand Tseng Kung-liang, co-respondent in the impeachment memorials, sought to distance himself from Han Ch'i by forcefully sponsoring a new and as yet unaffiliated rising star -- Wang An-shih. Shen-tsung finally accepted Han Ch'i's resignation in the 9th month of 1067, by which time he had become obsessed with the idea of meeting and using Wang An-shih.³⁴

Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih

In many ways Wang An-shih was typical of the men who moved into the bureaucratic elite during the second half of the eleventh century. The Wangs were part of the wave of sojourners who migrated from the old northern heartland (in their case from T'ai-yüan) to the new political and economic centers of the south during the upheavals of the Five Dynasties era.³⁵ The family settled in Kiangsi's Lin-ch'uan County, Fu-chou (Chiang-nan W.), a region that was just beginning to rise in economic and political significance during the early eleventh century.³⁶ With Wang's father Wang I (993-1039),

³⁴ The basic sources on Han Ch'i's resignation and Tseng Kung-liang's promotion of Wang An-shih are anthologized in HCP shih-pu 2, pp. 8a-11a. See also H. R. Williamson, Wang An Shih, Chinese statesman and educationalist of the Sung Dynasty, 2 vols. (London, 1935-37), Vol. 1, pp. 101-2. Williamson's chief narrative source is Pi Chung's Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien.

³⁵ Wang reviews his family's history in a short biographical notice for his father, "Hsien ta-fu shu," in Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 71, pp. 448-9. The basic source for Wang's life remains Ts'ai Shang-hsiang's Wang Ching-kung nien-p'u k'ao-lüeh of 1804 (repr. Shanghai, 1974). Ts'ai reconstructs Wang's life and career from a wide variety of sources, including literary collections and local gazeteers. H. R. Williamson's biography of Wang, in Wang An Shih, Vol. 1, is based largely on Ts'ai Shang-hsiang and on Wang's biography in SS, ch. 327, pp. 10541-51. For modern studies of Wang's early life and career see Saeki Tomi, O' Anseki, in his Chu' goku shi kenkyu' (Kyoto, 1978), Vol. 3, pp. 365-381; Higashi Ichio, O' Anseki shimpo', pp. 924-33 and O' Anseki jiten, pp. 129-35; and James T.C. Liu, Reform in Sung China, pp. 1-4. For a parallel study of the evolution of the careers and thought of Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang, see Bol, "This Culture of Ours," ch. 7, pp. 212-53.

³⁶ The political and demographic trends exemplified by Wang and his family are outlined in Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 42, No. 2 (Dec., 1982) pp. 365-

a chin-shih graduate of 1015, the family entered the bureaucratic stream: Wang I held a series of local offices culminating as vice prefect (t'ung-p'an) of Chiang-ning-fu (modern Nanking), where he died in 1039 and which Wang An-shih came to regard as home. Between the beginning of the century and 1068 the Wang lineage produced eight chin-shih graduates, including An-shih (chin-shih 1042), which in conjunction with their migration out of their native place to Chiang-ning reflects the lack of academic focus and geographic mobility characteristic of families specializing in government during the eleventh century. Known from his youth as a dazzling scholar (he placed fourth in his chin-shih class), Wang earned early recommendations from such luminaries as Ou-yang Hsiu and Wen Yen-po. Nonetheless, Wang spurned opportunities to break into official circles in the capital, preferring to serve in local posts in Chiang-nan where he could better discharge his family and financial responsibilities. In 1147 he took a post as magistrate of the coastal county of Yin-hsien (modern Ningpo), where he promoted the kinds of agricultural policies he would apply empire-wide during the New Policies, including irrigation and land reclamation projects and an early version of an agricultural loan measure that provided grain in the off-season to be paid back with interest at harvest time.³⁷

In 1058, after a decade of staff positions in prefectural and central government earned him the judicial intendency of Chiang-nan East Circuit, Wang sent up the "myriad word" memorial to Jen-tsung that was to become his reform manifesto.³⁸ Wang's memorial exemplifies the alarm intellectuals felt as they saw their country head towards crisis in the decades following the Sino-Tangut war: "Within the empire the security of the state is a cause for some anxiety, and on our borders there is the constant threat of the barbarians. Day by day the resources of the nation become more depleted and exhausted, while the moral tone and habits of life among the people steadily deteriorate. On all sides officials who have the interests of the nation at heart are fearful that the peace of the empire may not last."³⁹ The underlying cause of the crisis, for Wang, was that men of the present had moved too far from the laws and institutions of the ancient kings. At its

442. For the examination of those trends in Wang's home region, see Robert P. Hymes, Statesmen and gentlemen: the elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung (Cambridge, 1986).

³⁷ Higashi devotes a special section to Wang's tenure in Yin-hsien. See O Anseki shimpo, pp. 930-3, and SS, 327, p. 10541. The parallel chronologies of the lives and careers of Wang and Ssu-ma Kuang are conveniently tabulated in Higashi Ichio, O Anseki jiten, pp. 221-35. See also Saeki Tomi, O Anseki, pp. 439-50.

³⁸ "Shang Jen-tsung huang-ti yen-shih shu," Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 217-227. For English translations see Williamson, Wang An-shih, Vol. 1, pp. 48-84; and Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York, 1960), pp. 413-19. Higashi Ichio analyses Wang's memorial in O Anseki shimpo, pp. 921-77; see also Bol, "This Culture of Ours," pp. 216-18.

³⁹ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 39, p. 218, translation from de Bary, Sources, p. 414.

heart, Wang's memorial is an indictment of the prevailing political culture, a culture dominated by self-serving and convention-minded men selected by the examination system for their strong memories and literary skills rather than for the practical experience essential for good government. It was these men, Wang may well have thought, who had suppressed the Ch'ing-li reforms; and it was certainly these men who would ensure that even when emperor and court did promulgate the right kinds of measures, either they would not get put into action or they would be turned against the people. Consequently, Wang insisted, "the most urgent need of the time is to secure men of talent," for only then will it be possible to transform the decadent institutions that cause human suffering in order to approach the ideals of the ancient kings. And the only way to secure such men is to follow the example of the ancients -- that is, to create a nation-wide school system "to mold and train them" through a four-stage process of instruction, nurturance, selection, and employment that would produce activist, practical-minded men, trained and experienced in the specialties for which they were best suited, who could be given great latitude to carry out their projects "without being hampered by this or that regulation."⁴⁰ Wang did not expect his new bureaucrats to forgo their own interests; on the contrary, he proposed to cement their interests to the well-being of the state by paying them well enough to keep them honest. But he did expect them to all share the same values -- "to be uniformly instructed in the way of the ancient kings," as were the scholars of old, when "the heterodox learning of the hundred schools was all rejected, and no one dared study them." And he insisted on a return to that ancient shih ideal that held the civil and military arts to be inseparable, so that the defense of the borders and the palace would be in the hands of the scholarly elite (shih-ta-fu), rather than sloughed off to the most corrupt, ruthless, and irresponsible elements of society, men who could not even maintain themselves in their native villages, but had to leave their families to muster in the army.⁴¹

In Wang An-shih's view, then, the only way to meet the challenges of the day was to revitalize the bureaucracy by creating the widest possible pool of like-minded, action-oriented specialists who were devoted to the civil and military interests of the state. But even a revitalized bureaucracy did not mean that reform would proceed automatically, or that the emperor could remain aloof from the political process. On the contrary, Wang warned that activist rule (yu-wei) could only proceed if the emperor himself was firm and resolute and enforced political discipline. In the past -- and again Wang must have had the Ch'ing-li reforms in mind -- whenever some "vulgar opportunist" (liu-su chiao-hsing chih jen) disliked and opposed reform, "the court just called a halt and would not dare to proceed." The sage kings of antiquity, by contrast, never failed to push relentlessly forward:

Whenever the ancients aspired to great deeds they never failed to exterminate (cheng-chu) [their opportunist opponents] as a prelude to

⁴⁰ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 39, p. 220. For an interpretation of Wang's memorial as a call for the mobilization of bureaucratic entrepreneurs, see Smith, Taxing Heaven's Storehouse, pp. 117-18.

⁴¹ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 39, pp. 221, 223. See Bol, p. 218 and his sources, for further examples of Wang's stress on the need for unity of values and customs.

attaining their goals. Thus the Book of Poetry says 'By punishment and extermination we eliminate opposition.' In this way did King Wen (the Chou progenitor) first exterminate his opposition and only then achieve his goals for the world.⁴²

Because they inhabited an especially corrupt world the ancient kings had to overcome their reluctance to exterminate their adversaries, "for they knew that otherwise they could not accomplish great deeds." Wang assured Jen-tsung that his own task would be easier, since opportunistic nay-sayers were far out-numbered by the many who would welcome reforms. But this made it all the more ignoble for the emperor to allow himself to be swayed from the imperative to reform officialdom and the world. "If your majesty sincerely hopes to bring the world's talents to the fore then this minister urges that you decide once and for all (226)."

Although his imagery would become less sanguinary, in his six years as chief councilor Wang would repeat this same message to Shen-tsung over and over again: be resolute, crush dissent, and disregard the murmuring opposition of vulgar opportunists. And although Jen-tsung had had his one chance at reform and was not about to try again, under Shen-tsung "when An-shih came to the head of the country, all his proposals found their origins [in the "Myriad Word Memorial]."⁴³

Following the submission of his memorial Wang was appointed to a series of capital posts, including staff supervisor in the Office of Funds (san-ssu tu-chih p'an-kuan) of the Finance Commission, Auxiliary in the Academy of Worthies (chi-hsien yüan), and in 1061 drafting official (chih-chih-kao) for the Secretariat. During this period Wang's mother had resided in the capital, but when she died in the eighth month of 1063, five months after Jen-tsung, Wang An-shih returned to bury her in Chiang-ning.⁴⁴ Yet even though Wang spent all of Ying-tsung's reign in Chiang-ning, his name was constantly brought to the future emperor Shen-tsung's attention by his tutor Han Wei (1017-1098). For whenever Han's discourses met with the young prince's approval Han would say, "This is not my idea, it is the idea of my friend Wang An-shih."⁴⁵ When Shen-tsung ascended the throne his interest in Wang was fanned by Tseng Kung-liang as well, who insisted that Wang was "ministerial material;" and although Wang refused an imperial summons for an audience in the third month of Shen-tsung's reign (1067), he surprised even his friend Han Wei by accepting at the same time an appointment as prefect of Chiang-ning. But Wang was still out of the capital and out of sight of the emperor who

⁴² Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 39, p. 226.

⁴³ SS, 327, p. 10542. For the self-protective rerouting of dissent into art and poetry during Shen-tsung's reign see Alfreda Murck, Poetry and painting in Song China: the subtle art of dissent (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), Chap. 2, pp. 28-50.

⁴⁴ Ts'ai Shang-hsiang, Wang Ching-kung nien-p'u, 9, pp. 143-5.

⁴⁵ SS, 327, p. 10543.

wanted to meet him. Shen-tsung kept pressing his ministers for their opinions on Wang - - Wu K'uei and Han Ch'i both thought Wang appropriate for an academic post, but not for a position in the council of state -- and when Han Ch'i resigned as chief councilor in 1067.9, Shen-tsung appointed Wang to the Han-lin Academy, along with Ssu-ma Kuang. Seven months later (1068.4), burning with impatience, Shen-tsung ordered the "newly appointed Han-lin Academician Wang An-shih to appear for an audience immediately."⁴⁶

That first meeting between the 20-year old emperor and the 47-year old political maverick must have convinced Shen-tsung that here was an advisor whose activist ambitions matched his own. Wang An-shih even counselled the emperor to abandon T'ang T'ai-tsung as his model, and to reach back to the sages Yao and Shun, heretofore thought by "the scholars of this decadent age" (mo-shih hsüeh-shih tai-fu), content to accept the ordinary as their goal, to be beyond the reach of men of today.⁴⁷ Shen-tsung replied that perhaps with Wang's help he could attain such heights; but he did probe for the cause of Wang's sense of urgency, by asking how his predecessors had managed to hold all under heaven for one hundred years "without a major disaster." Wang's response, presented following the audience in a formal memorial entitled "[Why] this Dynasty has enjoyed a hundred years without disaster," supplied just the rationale for action that Shen-tsung had been seeking.⁴⁸

In essence, Wang argued that the survival of the dynasty had heretofore depended on the imperial virtues of care for the welfare of the people, open-mindedness towards the opinions of officials, fairness in the application of the laws, prudence and compliance towards the barbarians, and above all good fortune. But fortune and imperial virtue just barely offset the "the problems of slavish conventionality typical of a period of decline (yin-hsü mo-su chih-pi)." In the court, Wang charged, the ruler spends his time surrounded by eunuchs, women, and nit-picking bureaucrats, and "has not yet emulated those activist rulers of old who discoursed with learned scholars on the methods used by the former kings to order the world. . . ." At the institutional level, no changes had been made in the methods of training, selecting, and employing officials, and consequently the few capable men who did rise through the bureaucracy were so out-numbered by selfish, obstructionist mediocrities that nothing could be accomplished by government. Meanwhile, the peasantry was being destroyed by the burdens of labor service, yet no effort had been made to offer them relief, or to create offices devoted to improving irrigation and agricultural productivity. Similarly, the army was still mustered from among the sick and aged dregs of society, with no provisions made for training and drilling them or for putting them under the long-term command of dedicated generals. In sum, "There is no method to the management of resources, so that even if the government economizes the people will not prosper; even if we worry and strive the nation will not

⁴⁶ CPPM, 59, p. 1888.

⁴⁷ CPPM, 59, p. 1888; Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 2, p. 34.

⁴⁸ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 42, pp. 242-243, "Pen-ch'ao pai-nien wu-shih cha-tzu," anthologized in CPPM, 59, pp. 1888-1892.

become strong. The reason the empire has suffered no great calamity is because the time has not yet arrived for the barbarians to explode on the scene, and we have not yet been visited by great floods or droughts. Although it is attributed to the doings of men, it is in fact because of the aid of heaven. .. I beg your majesty to aim for the highest sageliness and to lay claim to the unending strand [that links you to the ancient kings]. You must know that the aid of heaven cannot be counted on, nor can the affairs of men be idly left to their own. The time for doing great deeds (ta yu-wei chih-shih) is right now."

However much Shen-tsung might disagree with certain elements of Wang An-shih's advice in the coming months, no other advisor so excited the emperor with a vision of great achievements -- achievements he announced that only Wang An-shih could help him realize.⁴⁹ From this time on Shen-tsung determined to bring Wang An-shih into the Council of State as an assisting civil councilor (ts'an-chih cheng-shih), but he met strong opposition from the incumbent assisting councilor T'ang Chieh (1010-1069), a man with a formidable reputation as a "straight speaker." T'ang rejected Wang as stubborn and impractical, and predicted publicly to the emperor and privately to Wang's sponsor Tseng Kung-liang that "if Wang is made a councilor he will change many things and disrupt the empire . . . and everyone already knows this."⁵⁰ But Shen-tsung could not be dissuaded, and in the second month of 1069 he offered the assistant councilor's post to Wang with the command that he could not turn it down.

For his part, Wang responded that it was indeed his hope to "assist the emperor to accomplish great deeds." But he cautioned that it would be difficult, for the court was filled with mediocrities (yung-jen) and outright villains (chien-jen), who through jealousy or sheer ignorance would conspire to block the few clear-thinking and independent men in office from accomplishing anything of merit, by overwhelming them with dissenting opinions (i-lun).⁵¹ Therefore in his answer to Shen-tsung's question about the first task before them, Wang An-shih replied that it was to "transform customs and mores and establish laws and institutions," by "strengthening the superior men and eliminating the petty ones (ch'ang chün-tzu, hsiao hsiao-jen)," with their pernicious power to corrupt the people and preclude all possibility of moral rule. The first step in Wang's reform vision, in short, was to eliminate all those -- like T'ang Chieh -- who opposed him. And with this "the emperor agreed." Wang's appointment to the council was announced in 1069.2, and the very next month he began to systematically neutralize his opponents.

TWO: GAINING POWER

While discussing possible appointments in the fall of 1070, Tseng Kung-liang urged the emperor to heed Chen-tsung's belief that "it is important to have people of

⁴⁹ CPPM, 59, p. 1894.

⁵⁰ Shen-tsung's discussions with and about Wang An-shih are reported in CPPM, 59, pp. 1894-5.

⁵¹ See CPPM, 59, pp. 1895-6 for the exchange between Wang and Shen-tsung.

different opinions stirring each other up, so that no one will dare to do wrong." But Wang An-shih forcefully disagreed: "If everyone at court agitates one another with different opinions then how will it be possible to govern? This minister humbly believes that if the court ministers in charge of affairs of state do not share one mind and one morality (t'ung-hsin t'ung-te) nor cooperatively strive for unanimity, then none of the tasks facing the empire can be accomplished."⁵² For Wang, nothing so impeded progress as the constant babble of contending opinion, and therefore change could only be founded on unanimity of opinion and the elimination of dissent. In the long run the most effective way to eliminate disagreement was to imbue the next generation of officials with "moral unity" (i tao-te), or a common ideology.

This quest for ideological uniformity underlay almost all of Wang's educational measures, including his proposals for the creation of a national school system, his reform of the examination system, the promulgation of his own commentaries to the classics as the key to passing the exams, and his attempt to pack such leading educational institutions as the Directorate of Education (kuo-tzu chien) and the new "Bureau for the Interpretation of the Classics" (ching-i chü) with his own relatives and followers.⁵³

But ultimately, Wang insisted, it was the emperor's responsibility to silence the critics of change, by exercising the imperial prerogative (jen-chu chih ch'üan) to decide issues of substance. In 1070 the emperor, torn as ever between Wang's insistence on uniformity and the remonstrances of such senior statesmen as Ssu-ma Kuang and Ouyang Hsiu, wondered at the continuing controversy surrounding the reforms. Wang, as

⁵² HCP, 213, p. 5169.

⁵³ After Wang's New Meaning of the Three Canons (San-ching hsin-i, on the Chou-li, Shih-ching, and Shu-ching) was made the basis of the civil service examinations in 1075, Pi Chung-yu (1045-1119) observed that "if a candidate's interpretation of the classics did not accord with Wang An-shih's, then no official would dare choose him." See his "Li-hui k'o-chang tsou-chuang," Hsi-t'ai chi 1, quoted in Wang Tseng-yu, "Wang An-shih pien-fa chien-lun," p. 145. On packing educational institutions, see HCP, 228, pp. 5545-6 and HCP, 243, p. 5917; on efforts to canonize Wang's commentaries, see HCP, 215, pp. 5245-7 and HCP, 265, pp. 6514-16. Wang first proclaimed the need to promote a uniform morality or ideology in his "Request to reform the examination system" ("Ch'i kai k'e t'iao-chih cha-tzu"), in Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 42, p. 245. For this and Wang's educational reforms in general see Thomas Lee, Government education and examinations in Sung China (Hong Kong, 1985), pp. 239-43. John Chaffee, The thorny gates of learning in Sung China (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 76-84, examines the consequences of Wang's school reforms, which really took root in the Post-reform era under Ts'ai Ching and Hui-tsung. For sources and more specific treatment see Kondo Kazunari, "O Anseki no kakyō kaikaku" (Concerning the Examination Reforms of Wang An-shi), To-yō-shi kenkyū, 46, No. 3 (1987) pp. 21-46. The intellectual foundation of Wang's educational reforms and the debate they spawned are discussed by Peter K. Bol, "Examinations and orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 compared," in Theodore B. Hutters, R. Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu, eds. Culture and state in Chinese history: conventions, accommodations, and critiques (Stanford, 1997), 29-57.

he would throughout his tenure as head of government, blamed the persistence of dissent on the emperor himself: "Although your majesty is far more sagacious than his predecessors, because you are insufficiently resolute (kang-chien) you have not yet succeeded in transforming civic culture by unifying morality (i tao-te i pien feng-su). As a result the cacophony of opinions continues."⁵⁴ In Wang's view, it was up to the emperor to

awe and intimidate the multitudes into compliance, so that the court can attend to affairs. . . . It is just like Heaven itself, which uses the yang-ch'i to activate the myriad things. Heaven does not let the different things saturate one another, but rather conceives them all with the one essence. Just so, if the imperial resolve is strong, then all under heaven will comply without being commanded; if not, the factions of the vast party of conventionalists (liu-su ch'un-tang) will strengthen by the day, while the imperial authority will daily wither.⁵⁵

The exercise of imperial prerogative meant two things for Wang: the steadfast enactment of imperial decisions, and unwavering support for reform activists. Wang continuously pressed Shen-tsung to stick to decisions he had made or approved, lest the power of imperial authority fall to the "factionalists" -- the reform opponents -- within the government. One key arena for the exercise of imperial power was the promotion and demotion of officials, which became increasingly politicized during the 1070s as the fulfillment of reform goals came to dominate personnel decisions. New Policy opponents who invoked procedural and ethical precedents to protect their own members from demotion and block the unilateral ascent of reform partisans inevitably encountered Wang's imperial prerogative argument. In mid-1070, for example, Wang denounced critics of an imperial order appointing his protege Li Ting (1028-1087) to the censorate by warning the emperor that "if your majesty . . . revokes the order appointing Li Ting . . . then your majesty's authority to appoint and dismiss (yü-tuo chih ch'üan) will have been compromised, and straight-speaking officials will no longer dare rely on your majesty as their leader."⁵⁶ In a separate incident a short time later an imperial rescript demoting K'ung Wen-chung (1038-1088) for an allegedly impertinent examination essay was repeatedly returned by officials in the Memorial Forwarding Office (t'ung-chin yin-t'ai ssu), with the support of the prominent reform opponent Han Wei. Wang An-shih charged K'ung with slandering the emperor, and successfully convinced Shen-tsung that if he did not enforce his decision "then the authority of the emperor will be usurped by

⁵⁴ HCP, 215, p. 5232.

⁵⁵ HCP, 214, pp. 5206-07.

⁵⁶ HCP, 213, p. 5174. Critics attacked Li Ting not directly for his policy views, but for his failure to mourn as mother the concubine who nursed, and possibly even bore him. For an analysis of the case as one example of the anxieties provoked by the intrusion into scholarly elite life of the market in women, see Patricia Ebrey, "Women, money, and class: Ssu-ma Kuang and Sung Neo-Confucian views on women," Papers on society and culture of early modern China (Taipei, 1992), pp. 629-30.

the multitude of evil[factionalists], and the conventionalists will so incite one another that in the future there will be nothing that we can do."⁵⁷ But Wang also urged the emperor to be unyielding on broader policy issues as well. For example, when Shen-tsung worried that the Bureau of Military Affairs (under Wen Yen-po) would reject Wang's proposal to replace mercenaries with a popular militia, Wang responded that "if the emperor genuinely wishes to enact a militia policy then who will be able to oppose it? This is for the emperor to decide."⁵⁸ In the end, ideological uniformity came down to a question of obedience to the emperor's (and Wang's) decisions, for as Wang insisted to Shen-tsung in 1072, "one may see an issue as right or wrong, but if one sees it as wrong when the court disagrees and deems it right, then one must obey the court's commands."⁵⁹

As long as Wang had the emperor's ear and support, the exercise of imperial prerogative provided the best possible protection for Wang's own reform policies. But it was equally important to extend that protection to Wang's lieutenants in the field, by immunizing them from outside criticism and interference. In his Myriad Word Memorial Wang had insisted on granting broad discretionary authority to field officials, arguing that "there has never been a single case in history that has shown it possible to obtain good government even with the right man in power if he is bound by one regulation or another so that he cannot carry out his ideas."⁶⁰ But where those ideas were as controversial and disruptive as the reform measures there was inevitable resistance against carrying them out, and it was precisely the most successful agents of reform who were most bitterly attacked as cruel and mean-spirited seekers of profit for the state and rewards for themselves (hsing-li chih ch'en, chü-lien chih ch'en). As a young man with a keen sense of mission and imperial responsibility, Shen-tsung took these charges very much to heart, but Wang An-shih saw every such expression of imperial concern as an abandonment of the reform cause. In the fourth month of 1072, for example, Wang complained about the continued attacks on his chief water-control engineer Ch'eng Fang,

⁵⁷ HCP, 215, pp. 5245-47. Wang was apparently gaining revenge for the demotion of one Hou P'u for a sycophantic exam essay on natural disasters that quoted Wang's own commentary to the Hung-fan. According to an excerpt from Lin Hsi's Yeh-shih, the demotion of K'ung Wen-chung had ramifications that chilled officialdom. K'ung's younger brother Wu-chung declined a lecturer's post, further fueling the court's anger; then K'ung's father, Yen-chih, turned down the post of prefectural judge of K'ai-feng out of fear of residing in the capital, requesting a provincial post instead. He was granted the same position in Yüeh-chou (Liang-che), but when salt returns there fell below quota he was impeached for "defying the New Policies" (wei-pei hsin-fa). K'ung Yen-chih was subsequently transferred to Hsüan-chou (Chiang-nan E.), where he was cashiered in mid-term: cited in HCP, 215, p. 5247.

⁵⁸ HCP, 213, pp. 5171-2.

⁵⁹ HCP, 230, p. 5605.

⁶⁰ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 39, p. 224.

chiding the emperor for investigating every charge made by "villainous, self-interested" partisans against the loyal and diligent officials working hard for the reforms.⁶¹ Two months later, in one of his many tirades against the detractors of the border official Wang Shao, Wang An-shih warned the emperor that the multitude of evil-doers were in danger of blocking the reforms and overwhelming the few real activists (chien-kung chin-li-che) in government with their baseless rumors and slander. Wang charged that by punishing reformers for the slightest misstep while letting slander and rumor-mongering go unquestioned the emperor was not only chilling the ardor of his most effective reformers, he was also encouraging factionalism. Wang appreciated that the emperor tolerated critics and dissenters out of a desire to "broaden what he hears and sees," but he insisted that by opening himself to lies and falsehoods the emperor was only blocking the path to knowledge. The solution, Wang concluded, was to honor the emperor's desire for accurate information by punishing the purveyors of slander and lies.⁶²

In the end Wang was enormously successful in garnering Shen-tsung's support for his policies and his men, and the entire New Policies era was characterized by an unusual devolution of authority and autonomy to agents in the field.⁶³ But Shen-tsung never lost his respect for the many prominent critics of reform tactics and policy, and these men battled endlessly with Wang for the mind and heart of the emperor. At moments of natural disaster or political turmoil Shen-tsung often heeded the urgings of his senior statesmen "to open up the channels of remonstrance" (k'ai yen-lu); but inevitably those channels would be reclosed. For Wang was relentless in his campaign to stamp out dissent, which he made a fundamental feature of his political vision. Even Lü Hui-ch'ing (1031-1110), Wang's closest associate until their falling out in 1075, was appalled by Wang's obsession with quelling dissent:

Wang An-shih is fond of saying that in the management of troops it is essential to enforce ranks, so that even those with the will to differ will not dare give voice to their opinions, and unanimity will be maintained. But in fact An-shih acts this way not only towards the army but towards the entire nation. Wang regards all under heaven as an enemy -- but even if he can manage to silence those close to him, can he really silence all under heaven?⁶⁴

⁶¹ HCP, 232, pp. 5634-5.

⁶² HCP, 234, pp. 5678-9.

⁶³ The question of decentralization of authority is discussed in Paul J. Smith, "State power and economic activism during the New Policies, 1068-1085: the tea and horse trade and the 'green sprouts' loan policy," in Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, eds., Ordering the world: approaches to state and society in Sung Dynasty China (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 76-127.

⁶⁴ HCP, 268, p. 6574.

However intolerant Wang may have been he did still adhere to long-established rules of political competition, which meant that he could not silence all dissent. But he could hound all dissenters out of office, and that is precisely what he did. The successful enactment of the New Policies was predicated on a three-fold political coup: capturing the council of state, ousting all opponents of reform from office, and appointing his followers to all key policy and remonstrance agencies.

Capturing the Council of State

The Ch'ing-li reforms demonstrated that no reform program could be mounted unless its advocates gained firm control of the government. After his appointment as assistant councilor in 1069.2, Wang An-shih moved swiftly to monopolize power for the reform coalition. Within weeks of receiving the emperor's mandate Wang launched a systematic campaign to wrest control of the Council of State, neutralize the Censorate, create a reform-specific bureaucratic apparatus, and place his followers in key posts throughout the government.

The key to creating a political apparatus dedicated to reform was to monopolize the Council of State, the paramount policy organ of government, with control over policy making and administration for both civil and military affairs. The Council was headed by one to three chief councilors (tsai-hsiang, or more formally t'ung chung-shu men-hsia p'ing-chang shih), who were concurrently the heads of the Secretariat-Chancellery (chung-shu men-hsia). The chief councilors were joined on the civil side by one to three assistant civil councilors (chih-cheng, or ts'an-chih cheng-shih). On the military side the Council included the Commissioner of the Bureau of Military Affairs (shu-mi shih), which was paired with the Secretariat-Chancellery as the "two authorities (liang-fu)." Joining the Commissioner on the Council were the Administrator or Co-administrator (chih, t'ung-chih shu-mi-yüan shih) and one or two Assistant Commissioners (shu-mi fu-shih).⁶⁵ As an advisory committee to assist the emperor, who needed to approve all its measures, the Council was designed more to facilitate sharp differences of opinion than to foster unanimous political action. But if one of the contending groups within government could pack the Council of State with its own adherents, it was then possible to ostracize political opponents from the capital, capture the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau, and push government in a single direction,⁶⁶ and it was just this strategy that Wang An-shih pursued.

⁶⁵ Edward A. Kracke, Civil service in early Sung China, 960-1067 (Cambridge, Mass, 1953), pp. 30-9. Despite the functional division into civil and military spheres all councilors were drawn from the civil bureaucracy, and many incumbents passed through all or some of the four levels. For a convenient table of incumbents in the Council of State from 1041 to 1125, see Higashi Ichio, O Anseki jiten, pp. 211-220. For more detail see Hsü Tzu-ming, Sung tsai-fu pien-nien-lu chiao-pu, (originally compiled after 1215, rpt. Peking, 1986).

⁶⁶ This paraphrases Kracke's discussion of monopolizing the ear of the emperor, Civil Service, p. 30.

When he was appointed assisting civil councilor in 1069.2, Wang joined a body that had no unified plan of action, headed by two men (Fu Pi and Tseng Kung-liang) who "want only not to offend the 'conventionalists' and have no interest in reforming our corrupted institutions. I am afraid that [with men like this in power] we cannot long rely on peace nor look forward to improving governance."⁶⁷ Armed with an imperial mandate for change, Wang immediately began to arrogate to himself powers of command that conventionally belonged to the chief councilors and even the emperor, and to intimidate his fellow councilors. After just two months in office Wang pressed his point on a legal issue with such vehemence that when Shen-tsung sided with Wang against T'ang Chieh and (as Wang put it) T'ang's clique, the infuriated T'ang abruptly died at age fifty-nine. Contemporaries regarded T'ang as the only councilor with the courage to oppose Wang, and with his death "Tseng Kung-liang (age 71) begged to retire because of age, Fu Pi (age 65) begged to be excused from attending to affairs because of illness, and Chao Pien (age 61), lacking the strength [to withstand Wang], just spent his days sighing. . . .As a result people said of the Secretariat that it included 'the quick (Wang), the old (Tseng), the sick (Fu), the dead (T'ang), and the embittered (Chao)."⁶⁸

Although T'ang's death opened a potential opportunity for Wang it also unleashed the hostility of officials who resented his hold on the emperor, and especially his creation (in 1069.2) of a separate base of power in the Finance Planning Commission (chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li-ssu, or FPC). That hostility exploded in the fifth month of 1069, when executive censor Lü Hui (1014-1071) sent up a ten-point memorial of impeachment. Among a wide-ranging list of abuses past and present, Lü accused Wang of nepotism; of suborning the emperor during illicit private conferences (liu-shen chin-shuo); of usurping chief ministerial powers of appointment in order to oust his adversaries; and of using the Finance Planning Commission to circumvent established agencies (such as the Finance Commission and the Council of State itself) and monopolize control over military and financial affairs. Wang reacted to Lü's charge as he would many times in the future, by threatening to resign. But Shen-tsung dissuaded Wang by issuing a personal edict reiterating his support and allowing Lü to be cashiered from the Censorate.⁶⁹ In 1069.10 Fu Pi was allowed to resign as chief councilor, and was replaced by Wang's own candidate, Administrator of the Bureau of Military Affairs and Wang's co-chief of the

⁶⁷ CPPM, 58, p. 1871.

⁶⁸ See Hsü Tzu-ming, Sung tsai-fu pien-nien-lu chiao-pu, 7, p. 377, citing the Ting-wei lu. Wang's specific battle with T'ang was over the issue of whether a Teng-chou woman who tried but failed to kill her abusive husband should suffer the death penalty, as T'ang and most members of the court agreed, or be more leniently penalized under the statutes for "injury committed in an attempt to kill" (mou-sha shang) as Wang insisted. See also CPPM, 59, pp. 1896-7, and SS, 327, p. 10544.

⁶⁹ For the affair see CPPM, 58, pp. 1867-77; for the text of Lü's memorial see HCP shih-pu, 4, pp. 22a-23a and Ts'ai Shang-hsiang, Wang Ching-kung nien-p'u k'ao-lüeh, 14, pp. 204-206. The memorial is summarized in Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 1, pp. 127-30.

Finance Planning Commission, Ch'en Sheng-chih. As Bureau Administrator Ch'en had sat on the Council since 1065, but as soon as he was promoted to chief councilor, he tried to break free of Wang, inciting a feud that culminated in his ouster one year later (see below). At the time, however, Ch'en's promotion testified to Wang's growing ability to shape Council membership to his needs.⁷⁰

In order to fully control the Council, Wang not only had to persuade Shen-tsung to appoint Wang's associates; he also had to dissuade the emperor from promoting Wang's rivals. It was especially important to keep potential dissenters out of policy-making positions during Wang's first year in office, when such critical measures as the "green sprouts" rural credit act (ch'ing-miao fa) and the agricultural lands and irrigation policy (nung-t'ien shui-li fa) were taking shape (see **Table __**). Thus in the first month of 1070 Wang persuaded the emperor to post Chang Fang-p'ing to the provinces despite Shen-tsung's desire to have him at hand in the capital.⁷¹ But he scored an even greater coup by dissuading Shen-tsung from appointing Wang's chief ideological rival, Ssu-ma Kuang, to the council of state. Whereas Shen-tsung valued Wang as an instrument of dynastic revival he reserved his warmest personal admiration for Ssu-ma Kuang, whom he would have always liked to keep by his side.⁷² Though Wang too had enormous respect for Ssu-ma, whom he regarded as a man of great distinction, Ssu-ma's views were the antithesis of his own, and for the moment Wang convinced Shen-tsung that putting Ssu-ma in the Council would her the emperor's own program: "Although Ssu-ma Kuang is disputatious (hao wei i-lun) his own talents would prevent him from harming government policy. But if he is employed in high office then he will become a 'red banner' (ch'ih chih) for other disputatious men," including Su Shih, Su Ch'e, and their followers.⁷³

But even though Wang An-shih exerted enormous influence over the emperor, Shen-tsung was by no means his pawn, and imperial support could be shaken by adverse public and political opinion. A crisis of confidence was incited in the second month of 1070 by Han Ch'i's denunciation of the "green sprouts" policy that almost toppled Wang An-shih from power. Han Ch'i's charge that the government set out to raise revenues by forcing or enticing poor peasants into taking loans that they couldn't repay shook Shen-

⁷⁰ Hsü Tzu-ming, Sung tsai-fu 7, pp. 409-410.

⁷¹ CPPM, 63, pp. 2026-7.

⁷² See for example HCP, 220, pp. 5338-41.

⁷³ CPPM, 63, pp. 2028-9; on Wang's praise of Ssu-ma Kuang the man, HCP, 213, pp. 5167-9. For an analysis of the many points of intersection and divergence in the careers and ideas of Wang and Ssu-ma see Peter Kees Bol, "Government, society, and state: on the political visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih," in Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, eds., Ordering the world: approaches to state and society in Sung Dynasty China (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 128-192.

tsung's faith in the measure, which was then the cornerstone of Wang's reforms. When Wang retired to his sick-bed in fury at the emperor's vacillation, the door was opened to a political revolt. Ssu-ma Kuang, in his capacity as Han-lin Academician, composed an imperial rescript stating that due to the reforms "the world is in ferment and the people are distressed;" and though Shen-tsung apologized to Wang for the unfortunate wording he nonetheless took advantage of Wang's self-imposed removal to appoint Ssu-ma Kuang to the Council, as assistant commissioner of military affairs. Shen-tsung simultaneously ordered his councilors to abolish the green sprouts measure, prompting the chief councilors Tseng Kung-liang and Ch'en Sheng-chih to mount the growing anti-Wang, anti-ch'ing-miao bandwagon by altering the original green-sprouts edict to exclude Wang's own prohibition against forced loans. At this point the reform movement was very close to collapsing. But faced with Wang's melodramatic but effective threat to resign, the emperor capitulated: Shen-tsung admitted to Wang that he had been deluded by the mass uproar over the green sprouts measure, and agreed to put the weight of his authority against the "conventionalists" who sought to block the reforms.⁷⁴

Once again Wang emerged from a crisis with renewed influence. Thwarted in his efforts to reverse the green sprouts policy, Han Ch'i requested assignment to a relatively minor post in the north; at the same time Ssu-ma Kuang realized that with Wang back in power his own position was untenable, and he insisted that his appointment to the military affairs bureau and the council be annulled.⁷⁵ Shen-tsung continued to urge Ssu-ma to play a role at court, but Ssu-ma protested that there was no point in remaining at court when the emperor would neither heed his advice nor give him real power; he even argued that with Wang An-shih setting his brother-in-law, Hsieh Ching-wen, on his adversaries like a dog, remaining in the capital was unsafe. In the fourth month of 1071 Ssu-ma Kuang retired to Lo-yang, the opposition capital for the next fourteen years.⁷⁶

With his chief ideological competitors neutralized Wang turned on those one-time supporters who had sided against him in the green sprouts imbroglio: Tseng Kung-liang, Ch'en Sheng-chih, and Chao Pien. Chao, Wang's fellow assistant councilor, was the only one of the three men to urge that no action on green sprouts be taken while Wang was out of office; but his disagreements with the policy, and his abomination of Wang's custom of dismissing all criticism as "prattle of the conventionalists," forced him to resign his post

⁷⁴ For Han Ch'i's memorial, which is discussed more fully in Part Three below, see CPPM, 68, pp. 2165-9. On the efforts to undermine Wang, see CPPM, 68, pp. 2172-3 and 2176-7. For a synopsis, see SS, 327, p. 10545.

⁷⁵ CPPM, 63, p. 2029. Han Ch'i was reassigned from Pacification Commissioner for all of Ho-pei Circuit to the single sub-circuit of Ta-ming-fu.

⁷⁶ HCP shih-pu, 7, pp. 35a-6a; HCP, 214, pp. 5201-2; and Ssu-ma's nien-p'u, appended to SMWC, p. 1068. On Loyang as the opposition capital, see Michael Dennis Freeman, "Loyang and the opposition to Wang An-shih: the rise of Confucian conservatism, 1068-1086" (Diss., Yale University, 1973).

in 1070.4.⁷⁷ Chao was replaced by the 58-year old Han Chiang (1012-1088), a chin-shih classmate and ardent supporter of Wang's who was (as the Censor Ch'en Hsiang complained) the second man in a row to move from co-leadership of Wang's Finance Planning Commission, with its focus on revenue gathering rather than good governance, to a post as civil councilor.⁷⁸

Though Chao Pien resigned his post in the Council voluntarily, Tseng Kung-liang and Ch'en Sheng-chih were driven out by the venom of Wang's animosity. Immediately after resuming his duties Wang had vehemently denounced the two men for scheming against the green sprouts measure, so shaking them that they in turn "withdrew because of illness."⁷⁹ Ch'en had particular reason to fear Wang, whose enmity he had earned by contemptuously abandoning his co-leadership of the Finance Planning Commission as soon as Wang had him named chief councilor. One month after the green sprouts affair (1070.3) Ch'en took advantage of his mother's illness to beg permission to resign, but in order to forestall gossip Shen-tsung forced the now ineffective man to stay on until his mother's death in 1070.10.⁸⁰ Tseng Kung-liang -- the man most responsible for getting Wang appointed to the Secretariat -- was completely unnerved by Wang's vituperative attack, and the defamation campaign waged against him by Wang and his followers. As Wang assumed an increasingly despotic hold on government Su Shih berated Tseng for not "saving the court." But Tseng replied that "the emperor and Wang An-shih are like one man; that is heaven's doing." Tseng withstood Wang's abuse as long as he could -- gossip maintained that he held out long enough to secure a career for his son -- but after he fell prostrate before Shen-tsung in 1070.9 the emperor allowed him to retire.⁸¹ With Ch'en out of office the following month the way was cleared for Wang's elevation to chief councilor. In the final month of 1070 Wang and his older protege Han Chiang were

⁷⁷ HCP, 210, pp. 5101-2. Chao Pien accepted the post of Prefect of Hang-chou.

⁷⁸ HCP, 210, pp. 2102-3. Han, like his FPC predecessor Ch'en Sheng-chih, was also already in the Council as an executive of the Bureau of Military Affairs. Han's younger brother Wei (1017-1098), though a trusted advisor to the emperor, was a staunch opponent of the reforms. For capsule biographies of Wang An-shih's relatives and associates see Higashi Ichio, Ô Anseki jiten, pp. 94-119; for biographies of those adversaries later termed the "Yüan-yu clique" see pp. 149-211. For greater detail consult the sources listed in Ch'ang Pi-te, Wang Te-i, et al, Sung-jen chuan-chi tzu-liao suo-yin, 6 Vols. (Taipei, 1974-76).

⁷⁹ CPPM, 68, p. 2181.

⁸⁰ CPPM, 66, pp. 2102-3; 68, p. 2183; HCP, 215, p. 5234; 216, p. 5261.

⁸¹ HCP, 215, pp. 5238-39. Tseng's son Hsiao-k'uan was named assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Military Affairs in 1075, but Li T'ao dismisses the claim that this was Tseng Kung-liang's motive.

both promoted to the chief position, but three months later Han was cashiered for errors made on assignment along the northwestern frontier.⁸²

Thus, from 1071 to his first resignation in 1074.4, Wang was the unrivalled chief of government. Most of the empire's elder statesmen -- including Ou-yang Hsiu (age 65), Ssu-ma Kuang (age 50), Wang T'ao (age 50), Fan Chen (age 63), Lü Hui (age 58), and Fu Pi (age 68) -- had been forced into retirement at the height of their powers.⁸³ Meanwhile, in the Council itself only Feng Ching (1021-1094) and the Bureau of Military Affairs chief Wen Yen-po could stand up against Wang, but their influence was limited. Feng Ching's protests carried no weight, and Wang systematically emasculated the Bureau of Military Affairs by putting reform advocates such as Han Chiang and Wang's relative Wu Ch'ung into the assistant bureau positions; by overwhelming Wen and his associates in Council deliberations; and most importantly by aggrandizing authority over military financing, personnel, and war-making for the Wang An-shih coalition in the Finance Planning Commission, in the Secretariat, and in the field.⁸⁴

Controlling Remonstrance Offices

Yet even capturing the Council of State did not guarantee Wang a free hand in promoting his policies, since under a division of responsibilities that by Sung times was accepted as conventional, the arbitrary exercise of power by the chief councilor -- or even the emperor -- was intended to be checked by dependent remonstrance agencies. The two most important remonstrance organs, the Censorate (yü-shih t'ai) and the Remonstrance Bureau (chien-yüan), were responsible for informing the emperor and the central authorities of local conditions and government effectiveness throughout the empire, for providing a channel for complaints and suggestions from all sources, and for criticizing policy recommendations and, where deemed necessary, returning them to the Council for reconsideration. According to Kracke, "[t]he institutional expression of the information and rectification functions, and the protection afforded those performing the functions, formed the closest Chinese parallel to the constitutional separation of powers."⁸⁵

But however autonomous the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau were intended to be in theory, in practice their privileged status emanated from an emperor whose

⁸² HCP, 218, p. 5301; 221, pp. 20a-2a. Han Chiang was brought back as chief councilor 1074.4-1075.8.

⁸³ Or so charged the censor, Yang Hui, himself a victim of Wang's climb to power. See HCP, 224, pp. 5449-50.

⁸⁴ For examples see HCP, 211, pp. 5138-9; 213, pp. 5166-67; 244, pp. 5944-5. As one indication of how the reformers circumvented Wen Yen-po, until 1075 the pao-chia militia system was controlled by the reform-dominated Court of Agricultural Supervision rather than the Bureau of Military Affairs. See SS, 192, p. 4770.

⁸⁵ Kracke, Civil Service, p. 33.

respect for their dependence was buttressed only by convention and public opinion, and not by law. In a regime as determined to flout convention as that of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih, men who actually exercised their remonstrance prerogative could expect very little protection. With Lü Hui's ouster as Executive Censor in mid-1069 the precedent was set for removing any remonstrance official who dared attack Wang's policies or his tactics. In 1069.8 three censors (Liu Shu, Liu Ch'i, and Ch'ien I) were cashiered for denouncing Wang's reckless, ruthless tampering with time-honored institutions, signalling an all-out war by Wang's forces against the remonstrance bureaus.⁸⁶

Wang An-shih and the emperor sought to exempt reform policies and personnel as appropriate targets of remonstrance. In the early months of 1070 the Probationary Censor Chang Chien, youngest brother of the philosopher Chang Tsai, joined the chorus of green sprouts opponents with a series of memorials denouncing the Finance Planning Commission and all its enterprises, Wang An-shih and his fiscalist confederates Lü Hui-ch'ing and Han Chiang, and the timorous accomplices to Wang's crimes, Tseng Kung-liang, Ch'en Sheng-chih, and Chao Pien. In the fourth month of the year, with Wang firmly returned to power, an imperial edict charged Chang Chien with "insulting state ministers and laying false charges," and demoted him to a post as county magistrate.⁸⁷ Although Shen-tsung was deeply distressed by the uproar over the green sprouts measure, Wang An-shih convinced him that the censorate was at the center of a conspiracy against the emperor's reform program: "It is the role of remonstrance officials to uphold the policies of the court. Where then is the justice in [their] banding together with the 'conventionalists' like this?" Shen-tsung agreed with Wang, later adding that the reason for all the agitation over the rural credit measure was because "I have put the wrong men in the Censorate and the Remonstrance Bureau." Thus just a few days before dismissing Chang Chien the emperor cashiered the Executive Censor Lü Kung-chu, Chang's superior and the spearhead of censorial remonstrance against the policy.⁸⁸

In essence, then, Wang and the emperor viewed the censorate as an administrative arm of the court, rather than as an independent political entity. Consequently censorial opposition to any regime decisions constituted grounds for dismissal. In 1070.5 Shen-tsung even authorized the use of preemptive dismissals, cashiering the Acting Director of the Censorate, Ch'en Chien, simply on the expectation that he would "veto" the controversial appointment of Wang's protegee Li Ting from a junior position as civil

⁸⁶ CPPM, 63, pp. 2025-6; HCP, shih-pu, 5, pp. 3b-4a.

⁸⁷ HCP, 210, pp. 5107-8. Chang's colleague Wang Tzu-shao was also demoted for "giving the appearance of rectitude while secretly embracing an evil clique," by condemning the green sprouts policy even though he had recommended his own brother to be one of its administrators.

⁸⁸ CPPM, 68, pp. 2188-9; HCP shih-pu, 7, pp. 33b-4b; HCP, 210, pp. 5095-9.

aide to investigating censor.⁸⁹ This restrictive view of censorial power applied equally to regime members who crossed Wang. In 1070.6 Shen-tsung took the initiative in dismissing Hu Tsung-yu (1029-94) from his concurrent posts as chief of the Remonstrance Bureau and co-director (with Lü Hui-ch'ing) of the Court of Agricultural Supervision, the successor to the Finance Planning Commission as the nerve-center of reform economic policy (see below). In an angry denunciation before his state councilors the emperor lashed out at Hu for obstructing court policy, citing in particular Hu's opposition to the transfer of personnel powers from the Bureau of Military Affairs to the West Bureau of Personnel Evaluation of the Secretariat. Han Chiang chimed in that it was the responsibility of remonstrance officials to adhere to imperial directives, and Wang An-shih capped the denunciation by adding that though it was not wrong for censors to disagree with a given measure, it was totally unacceptable for them to harbor evil designs to obstruct policy.⁹⁰ For it was the enactment of policy that was paramount for Wang and the emperor, and there were few constitutional principles that they would not bend to ensure that reform policies were vigorously prosecuted. It was this imperative that Wang invoked in mid-1071 when he urged that Executive Censor Yang Hui be dismissed for his opposition to the hired service (or service exemption) measure (mu-i fa): "If I commit transgressions in the service of your majesty none of the great ministers will want to conceal them, so there is no need for a Yang Hui to keep watch on my actions. But with a man such as Hui occupying the path of remonstrance then those officials in the provinces who should exert themselves to administer the laws will [hold back on the assumption] that the policies are going to be blocked, and then how will anything get completed? . . . The court has been prosecuting the reform program for years now without accomplishing very much, because each time our initiatives have been stalled; therefore I fear that we are unlikely to see any results."⁹¹ The very next month (1071.7) Yang Hui and his staff member Liu Chih were demoted out of the censorate, completing the purge of Wang's opponents from key remonstrance positions.⁹² As surveyed by the fourteenth-century authors of the Sung History, Wang's coup seemed quite stunning: seventeen censors, four policy critics, and three drafting officials (chih-

⁸⁹ HCP, 211, p. 5121. This was just the opening salvo in a war between Wang and the established civil service over the emperor's prerogative to make appointments based on skills (and ideological conformity) rather than formal civil service status. The entries from the Ch'ang-pien are anthologized in CPPM, 61, pp. 1997-2004.

⁹⁰ HCP, 212, pp. 5159-60. According to Hu's biography in the Sung-shih Hu earned Wang's enmity by opposing the appointment of Li Ting: SS, 318, p. 10370. Another regime member to be ousted from the censorate for crossing Wang was Wang's brother-in-law Hsieh Ching-wen. Hsieh was put in the censorate specifically to attack Su Shih, but when, in 1071, he began to attack Hsüeh Hsiang and Wang Shao as well, Wang An-shih had him dismissed: HCP, 219, pp. 5321-2; HCP, 230, pp. 5085-6.

⁹¹ HCP, 224, p. 5439.

⁹² HCP, 225, pp. 5487-8.

chih-kao) ousted from office in Wang's first two years in office.⁹³ With most other spokesmen for the opposition driven into retirement or assigned to the many temple posts that were created as sinecures for dissenters, Wang's purge of the government was virtually complete.⁹⁴

Of course, with every opponent expelled from a critical post room was made for a Wang An-shih supporter. Wang's open campaign to pack the government with his followers gave rise to a reputation for "exclusively employing mean and petty men" (chuan yung hsiao-jen), and naturally precipitated charges of factionalism.⁹⁵ But the force of such accusations diminished as Wang strengthened his grip on government. In mid-1070, for example, Wang's opponents complained that he was appointing fresh chin-shih holders to editorial positions in the Institute for the Veneration of Literature (ch'ung-wen yüan), including a disciple (Lu Tien), a "guest" member of his entourage (Chang An-kuo), and a finance expert who was notoriously incompetent in the classics (Lü Hui-ch'ing's younger brother Sheng-ch'ing). But by this time Wang controlled the Remonstrance Bureau through his brother-in-law Hsieh Ching-wen, who transformed the complaint into an attack on a fourth newcomer to the post (Hsing Shu), a protegee of Wang's opponent Lü Kung-chu who was demoted out of the Institute while Wang's followers all remained.⁹⁶ One month later Wang's longtime associate Hsüeh Hsiang (1016-1081) was named Edict Attendant in the Hanlin Academy, and when Feng Ching complained about appointing an amoral fiscalist -- for Hsueh was known above all as a financial expert -- to so delicate a post, Emperor Shen-tsung personally intervened with a rescript of praise for Hsüeh proclaiming that "among those things that are foremost in the governance of affairs, finance is the most urgent."⁹⁷ Occasionally a follower of Wang's would refuse an assignment that appeared too blatantly political. In 1070.9, for example, the rising star Tseng Pu (1036-1107) cited his low rank as a reason for declining a lectureship in the Hall for the Veneration of Governance (ch'ung-cheng tien), where

⁹³ SS, 327, p. 10546. The number of censors includes Lü Hui and Lü Kung-chu.

⁹⁴ On the temple posts created for dissidents see HCP, 211, p. 5128.

⁹⁵ CPPM, 64, pp. 2053-71, devotes a chapter to Wang's "mean and petty men," among whom are included Li Ting, Tseng Pu, Teng Wan, Chang Tun, Lü Chia-wen, and many more. Fan Tsu-yü (1041-98) delivered a post-reform diatribe against Wang's "promotion of petty men to mislead the nation" that icted all the chief financial specialists and border officials of Shen-tsung's reign, including one of the most brilliant scientific ms of his day, Shen K'uo. See SS, 337, pp. 10798-9. On Shen K'uo as an example of the quintessential New Policies reformer, see Paul Christopher Forage, "Science, technology, and war in Song China: reflections in the Brush Talks from the Dream Creek by Shen Kuo (1031-1095)" (Diss., University of Toronto, 1991), ch. 3.

⁹⁶ HCP, 211, p. 5129. On Lü Sheng-ch'ing's shortcomings as a classical scholar see HCP, 253, pp. 6196-7.

⁹⁷ HCP, 212, pp. 5155-7.

Wang wanted to put him to control Classics Mat debate and scrutinize the flow of memorials from the opposition.⁹⁸ But in a career environment that had become increasingly competitive most men were eager to accept all the spoils of the conservatives' political defeat, and in a few short years Wang had thoroughly consolidated his hold on power. As the memoirist Wei T'ai (ca. 1050-1110), a friend of Wang's and brother-in-law of Tseng Pu, observed:

Wang Ching-kung grasped the reins of state and dedicated himself to transforming the world. Since through their memorials and opinions the old men of accumulated virtue refused to cooperate with Wang, he instead reached down to employ men newly advanced [into the civil service], appointing them to posts without regard for formal rank. Thus in no time at all the policies that were to characterize the entire period were all launched, and in the forbidden recesses of the Hanlin Academy, the halls of the Censorate, and in the strategic positions at court and in the provinces, there were no vacancies that were not filled by these newly advanced scholars.⁹⁹

Ssu-ma Kuang viewed the situation even more ominously just before retiring to Lo-yang in 1071.4. By this time, as Ssu-ma saw it, Wang's hold on government was complete: his own party of friends and relatives were in power, all those who disagreed with him were purged, and the emperor had become such a slave to Wang's views that imperial authority really emanated from Wang himself.¹⁰⁰

Creating a reform apparatus

By commandeering existing posts for reform partisans Wang could suppress dissent, control the flow of documents and information, and dominate routine administrative affairs. But the routine administrative apparatus, with its checks and balances, multiple and often mutually conflicting responsibilities, and elaborate chain of command, was never intended to foster rapid decision-making or flexible implementation of policy. Therefore in order to meet the extraordinary demands of the New Policies

⁹⁸ HCP, 215, p. 5236. Until 1071.7, when he accepted a post as Provisional Proclamation Drafting Official (shih chih-chih-kaio) in place of a man who refused to do Wang's bidding, Tseng Pu preferred to occupy low-ranked but extremely powerful positions at the top of such New Policies nerve centers as the Office for the Compilation of Secretariat Regulations (pien-hsiu chung-shu t'iao-li-ssu) and the Court of Agricultural Supervision (Ssu-nung ssu). For Yang Hui's review of Tseng Pu's meteoric rise see HCP, 225, pp. 5480-1.

⁹⁹ Cited in HCP, 260, p. 6336.

¹⁰⁰ HCP, 220, pp. 5338-41.

Wang and his colleagues preferred to circumvent the existing administrative structure altogether, by creating new institutions to carry out specific reform tasks.¹⁰¹

At the top of this reform-dedicated administrative apparatus sat the Finance Planning Commission (chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li-ssu), established in the second month of 1069 to "dominate and restrain the engrossers, equalize wealth and assist the poor, and liberate the flow of wealth through the world."¹⁰² On a more mundane political level, the Finance Planning Commission was created as a vehicle for excluding potentially obstreperous State Councilors, particularly Fu Pi, Tseng Kung-liang and Wen Yen-po, from reform deliberations. Headed directly by Wang and his closest associates -- Han Chiang, the "Propagating Abbot" (ch'uan-fa sha-men) of the New Policies, and Lü Hui-ch'ing (1032-1111), and their "Divine Protector" (hu-fa shan-shen) -- the Finance Planning Commission assumed the status of 'a mini-secretariat within the Secretariat,' and "anything Wang needed to accomplish he enacted directly out of the Commission."¹⁰³

It was through the Finance Planning Commission that Wang assembled his reform cadre and launched his first reform measures, including the "tribute transport and distribution act" (chün-shu fa, 1069.7), the "green sprouts act" (ch'ing-miao fa, 1069.9), and the "agricultural lands and water conservancy act" (nung-t'ien shui-li fa).¹⁰⁴ The executive affairs of the Commission were entrusted to an Executive Secretariat (chih-chih-ssu chien-hsiang wen-tzu kuan), charged with collating reports from the provinces and planning policy initiatives. The first incumbents were Lü Hui-ch'ing, a Chou-li (Rites of Chou) scholar whom Wang regarded as one of the finest thinkers in memory, and Su Ch'e, the Szechwanese finance expert and brother of Su Shih. Su's philosophy of fiscal restraint proved wholly incompatible with the expansionist thrust represented by

¹⁰¹ Winston Lo, "Circuits and circuit administration in the territorial administration of Sung China," Monumenta Serica, 31 (1974-75), pp. 39-107, esp. 89. For a good example of the cumbersome and inflexible administrative process, see Ssu-ma Kuang's description of the pre-reform price-control system managed by the ever-normal granaries, HCP, 384, pp. 1b-2a.

¹⁰² HCP shih-pu, 4, p. 5b. The chief study of the Finance Planning Commission is Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 264-327.

¹⁰³ CPPM, 66, p. 2105; Higashi, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, p. 335. Han Chiang and Lü Hui-ch'ing earned their sobriquets when they kept the reforms in motion during Wang's first retirement, in 1074. See SS, 327, p. 10548.

¹⁰⁴ Unless otherwise specified, the following discussion is drawn from Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 264-363. For a clear synthesis of Higashi and other Japanese scholars on the structure, personnel, and responsibilities of the Finance Planning Commission see Mira Ann Mihelich, "Polders and the politics of land reclamation in southeast China during the Northern Sung Dynasty, 960-1126" (Diss., Cornell University, 1979), pp. 48-60.

the FPC, and he left his post and his dalliance with the reformers in 1069.8.¹⁰⁵ Lü Hui-ch'ing was assigned to a court post one month later, but as Wang's most trusted lieutenant he continued to dominate the Commission and its appointees, whom Lü Kung-chu (no relation) charged were all his sycophants.¹⁰⁶

The basic information necessary for policy planning was supplied to the Executive Secretariat by a contingent of special "Commissioners for the Consideration of Benefit and Harm" (hsiang-tu li-hai kuan), who were dispatched throughout the empire to conduct on-the-spot investigations of agriculture, irrigation, taxes, and labor service. Despite Lü Kung-chu's charge of sycophancy, the eight men appointed to the investigative post (including Ch'eng Hao, who was to break with Wang over the issue of interest on the "green sprouts" loans) were largely chosen for their interest and experience in agriculture and water control, and to a lesser degree finance.¹⁰⁷ The policies that came out of the FPC planning process, particularly the green sprouts rural credit program, the agriculture and water control measure, and later (under the direction of the Court of Agricultural Supervision) the service-exemption (mien-i) act, were executed by a new addition to the Sung circuit administrative structure previously dominated by the fiscal intendant (chuan-yün shih) and the judicial intendant (t'i-tien hsing-yü): the intendants for ever-normal granaries, agriculture, and water conservancy (t'i-chü ch'ang-p'ing nung-t'ien shui-li kuan).¹⁰⁸ By late 1069 forty-one intendants or assistant intendants (kuan-kou kuan) had been despatched to virtually every circuit of the empire, filled by men at the lower levels of the civil service (including at least three from executory-class posts as civil aides) who fit the typical FPC profile of proven skills in finance and agricultural improvement.¹⁰⁹ The intendants supervised a network of officials designated from among the existing administrative staff of every prefecture and county to manage the

¹⁰⁵ HCP shih-pu, 5, pp. 13b-19a anthologizes Su's memorials on the FPC, including his "Chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li-ssu lun-shih chuang," from Luan-ch'eng chi (SPPY ed.), 35, pp. 1a-5a.

¹⁰⁶ CPPM, 66, p. 2106. For capsule biographies of all incumbents as Executive Secretary see Higashi, O' Anseki shimpo, pp. 284-302.

¹⁰⁷ Higashi, O' Anseki shimpo, pp. 336-337. For capsule biographies see pp. 304-315. As Mihelich points out, the eight investigators were characterized by men who had demonstrated a strong disposition towards activism in water control and agricultural affairs in low-level offices, with more experience in their home regions than in the capital. See p. 55.

¹⁰⁸ For the evolution of the Sung system of circuit administration, see Winston Lo, "Circuits and Circuit Administration."

¹⁰⁹ For an analysis of the professional traits of 71 men appointed Intendant or assistant intendant between 1069 and 1086, see Paul J. Smith, "State power and economic activism." For capsule biographies of the first wave of intendants, see Higashi, O' Anseki shimpo, pp. 317-334.

ever-normal granaries, and to collect the enormous sums of money generated by the green sprouts loans and the service exemption fees. This new command structure, extending from the Finance Planning Commission chiefs through the intendants to their designated functionaries in local government, circumvented the traditional financial nerve-system dominated by the Finance Commission and the circuit fiscal intendants, and channelled surpluses from the new revenue-generating enterprises directly to Wang and his reform coalition in the state council.¹¹⁰

The creation of a parallel administrative apparatus devoted purely (as opponents saw it) to generating revenues inspired a barrage of outraged criticism. A memorial submitted by Su Shih in late 1069 captures the flavor of the complaints voiced by Ssu-ma Kuang, Lü Kung-chu, and by his own brother Su Ch'e:

From the founding of the dynasty to the present, the fiscal administration of the empire has been entrusted solely to the commissioner, assistant commissioners, and the supervisors of the Finance Commission, who for more than one hundred years have left no matter untended. Now, for no cause, another commission has been set up in the name of "Coordinating the regulations of the Finance Commission." Six or seven young men are empowered to discuss fiscal policies day and night within the bureau, while more than forty emissaries have been sent out to enact their policies in the provinces. The vast scale of their initial operations has made people frightened and suspicious; the strangeness of the new laws adopted has made officials fearful and puzzled. Worthy men seek for an explanation, and failing to get any, cannot relieve their anxiety; small men simply conjecture as to what is going on at court and give voice to slander, saying that Your Majesty, as the master of 100,000 chariots, is interested in personal profit, while the state councilor (Wang An-shih), acting as chancellor of the Son of Heaven, is concerned only with managing wealth (chih-ts'ai).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Smith, "State power and economic activism;" Wang Tseng-yü, "Pei-Sung te Ssunung-ssu," in Teng Kuang-ming and Ch'i Hsia, eds., Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi (Ho-pei, 1989), pp. 8-35, esp. 9; Robert M. Hartwell, "The imperial treasuries: finance and power in Song China," Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies, 20 (1988), p. 65. For Winston Lo's model of the Sung system of dual control over county magistrates see "Circuits and circuit administration," pp. 92-5.

¹¹¹ Su Shih, "Shang Shen-tsung huang-ti," Ching-chin Tung-p'o wen-chi shih-lueh (ca. 1173; rpt. Shanghai, 1936), 24, pp. 141-2, translation revised from Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, eds, Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol. 1, p. 426. HCP shih-pu, 6, p. 19b, argues persuasively that the correct date of this memorial is 1069.12, and not 1071.2 as icated in the original text. Other influential denunciations of the FPC include Su Ch'e's, cited above; Lü Kung-chu, HCP, 210, pp. 5095-9; and Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i pa t'iao-li-ssu ch'ang-p'ing-shih shu," in SMWC, 44, pp. 559-63.

The uproar raised against the Finance Planning Commission convinced Shen-tsung to abolish the office in the fifth month of 1070, sooner than Wang An-shih had wanted.¹¹² But the entire planning and administrative apparatus was simply transferred to a moribund but long-established -- and therefore more legitimate -- agency, the Court of Agricultural Supervision (ssu-nung ssu). The Ssu-nung ssu inherited the FPC's position as financial command center of the reforms, amassing huge surpluses through the course of Shen-tsung's reign while the routine fiscal apparatus under the Finance Commissioner slid ever deeper into debt.¹¹³ The top posts in the Court of Agricultural Supervision were filled by the chief reform policy-makers, including Lü Hui-ch'ing and Tseng Pu; these men occupied the Ssu-nung ssu directorship in conjunction with their concurrent assignments in key policy, remonstrance, and drafting positions, creating an interlocking directorate that merged advisory and operational functions in the reform leadership and subordinated the government's most important operations to the fiscal imperatives of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih.¹¹⁴

The financial apparatus created by Wang and his associates by no means exhausted the new reform-dedicated organizations. Reformers consolidated their power with the creation of other new agencies at the central and provincial levels. The most important new policy-making agency was the Sub-council for the Compilation of Secretariat Regulations (p'ien-hsiu chung-shu t'iao-li-ssu), established in mid-1069 as a reform "think-tank" within the Secretariat to consider issues of policy and administrative restructuring. The Sub-council was answerable directly to Wang An-shih, and helped him consolidate his power vis-a-vis the other state councilors and the emperor himself.¹¹⁵ The executive level of Wang's special agency was staffed by five Secretariat Examiners (chien-cheng chung-shu wu-fang kung-shih) -- one for each Division (fang) of the Secretariat. These five Examiners and their staff were under the overall supervision of a Chief Examiner (tu chien-cheng). The chief and divisional positions were filled by the most promising members of the reform clique, including Lü Hui-ch'ing, Tseng Pu, Shen K'uo, Teng Wan, and P'u Tsung-meng, among others, and always included the director of the Court of Agricultural Supervision on concurrent assignment.¹¹⁶ In addition the

¹¹² HCP, 211, p. 5122.

¹¹³ Wang Tseng-yu, "Pei-Sung te Ssu-nung-ssu," pp. 26-7.

¹¹⁴ On the concurrent posts see Wang Tseng-yu, "Pei-Sung te Ssu-nung-ssu," pp. 10-11. It was this subordination of government to finance that most outraged the opponents of the reforms, as reflected in outgoing censor Ch'en Hsiang's charge (in 1070.4) that "ever since Your Majesty has put Wang An-shih in charge of the government he has done nothing but plot to raise revenues." HCP, 210, pp. 5102-3.

¹¹⁵ Higashi Ichio, O Anseki jiten, p. 79; SHY, chih-kuan 5, pp. 8b-9a.

¹¹⁶ On the Secretariat Examiners see Kumamoto Takashi, "Shoken seikan -- O Anseki seiken no ni naite tachi," To yo shi kenkyu, 47, No. 1 (1988), pp. 54-80, esp. the table of incumbents, pp. 62-3.

administrative range and authority of the Secretariat Examiners were enhanced by sending many of them into the field on ad hoc assignments as Investigative Commissioners (ch'a-fang shih), a New Policies trouble-shooting post that enabled reform policy-makers to directly monitor the progress of policy initiatives and the compliance of officials in the field.¹¹⁷ As Yang Hui complained in 1071.2 in reference to Tseng Pu, the new bureau facilitated Wang's domination of the government by allowing him to settle all matters pertaining to the Secretariat with his Chief Examiner, without reference to the other civil councilors.¹¹⁸ When Shen-tsung assumed direct control of the government after Wang's final retirement in 1076, however, he began recouping executive power from the Secretariat, reducing the Secretariat Examiners to little more than clerks.¹¹⁹

At the regional level, the administrative reach and extractive capacity of the reformers were extended by the creation of new multi-circuit superintendencies, in particular the Superintendency for Tea and Horses (tu-ta t'i-chü ch'a-ma-ssu) that dominated the economies of Szechwan and Shan-hsi, and the Superintendency for State Trade (tu t'i-chü shih-i-ssu) that presided over state wholesale and credit operations in the capital and the provinces. Unlike the Ever-Normal intendancies, which were linked through a direct chain of command to the central government, these two superintendencies were autonomous state enterprises that traded revenues for dependence, operating under the protection, but not the direct supervision, of the reform leadership.¹²⁰ And other circuit intendancies, such as the pao-chia militia intendants, were also created in the course of the New Policies. In conjunction with the expansion of traditional circuit positions, the new network of regional intendancies tightened the reformers' control over the people and the resources of the empire, as Ssu-ma Kuang lamented just prior to his death in 1086:

When Wang An-shih got hold of the reins of government he wanted to press forward vigorously with his New Policies. In every circuit he set up an Intendant of Ever-normal and Universal Charitable Granaries and Farming Lands and Irrigation. Afterwards he added intendants' positions for every type of affair; moreover investigators (an-ch'a kuan) were also appointed [for each of these new functions], all of whom wielded the same authority as a [regular] circuit official. At the same time, he also increased

¹¹⁷ Secretariat Examiners who served concurrently as Investigative Commissioners included Li Ch'eng-chih, Chang Tun, Hsiung Pen, Lü Hui-ch'ing, P'u Tsung-meng, and Shen K'uo: Kumamoto, "Shoken seikan," table, pp. 62-63; HCP, 251, p. 6116. On the post itself, see SHY, chih-kuan 42, pp. 62a-3a.

¹¹⁸ HCP, 220, pp. 5346-7.

¹¹⁹ Kumamoto, "Shoken seikan," pp. 75-7.

¹²⁰ On the Superintendency for Tea and Horses, see Smith, Taxing heaven's storehouse; on the Superintendency for State Trade, see Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," pp. 187-8.

the number of fiscal vice-intendants and fiscal supervisors. And for each post he selected young, low-ranked, frivolous officials, with seniority status no higher than vice-prefect, county magistrate, or market inspector. . . . Officials such as these showed no concern for the affairs of state nor sympathy for the plight of the common people, but just devoted themselves to collaborating in schemes aimed at gaining promotions [for themselves] and revenues [for the state].¹²¹

It is to this search for revenues under Wang An-shih that we now turn.

***THE FIRST PHASE OF THE NEW POLICIES:
ECONOMIC REFORM UNDER WANG AN-SHIH***

[INSERT TABLE 4, Chronology of the New Policies, two facing pages]

Effective control of all the major organs of policy-making, implementation, and remonstrance allowed Wang's coalition to mount a sweeping program of political, economic, and military reform. Under the banner of "activist statecraft" (ta yu-wei chih cheng), the reformers enacted a wide array of educational, administrative, and legal measures designed to reshape the outlook of the the civil service, improve administrative efficiency, and extend government control over the populace.¹²² But for reformers and opponents both, it was the measures devoted to "enriching the nation and strengthening

¹²¹ HCP, 368, pp. 23b-4a.

¹²² For sources on Wang's educational reforms, see n. 53. The chief administrative measure enacted before Shen-tsung's Yüan-feng administrative reforms was the Granary System (ts'ang-fa) or "increased clerical salaries" (tseng li-lu), promulgated in 1070 as an effort to professionalize the clerical service. Salaries were followed by the introduction of examinations and merit promotions to move effective clerks into minor offices, and the opening up of clerical positions to irregular executory-class officials and military servitors with the appropriate experience. See James Liu, Reform in Sung China; Miyazaki Ichisada, "O⁻ Anseki no rishi go⁻itsu saku -- so⁻ho⁻ o chu⁻shin to shite," in his Ajiashi kenkyu (Kyoto, 1957), Vol. 1, pp. 311-64; and Liu K'un-t'ai, "Wang An-shih kai-ke li-chih te she-hsiang yü shih-chien," in Teng Kuang-ming and Hsü Kuei, eds, Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi (Hangchou, 1987), pp. 282-96. In order to contain the persistent unrest that accompanied the enactment of the New Policies, from 1071 on the government began expanding the regions in which it applied the "heavy laws" (chung-fa), which made punishments more severe, extended liability on the part of accomplices and kin further, and offered rewards that were greater than under ordinary penalties. In addition to the frontier war zones where they were routinely invoked, the government ultimately extended the "heavy penalties" to selected counties of K'ai-feng, parts of Ching-hsi, and all of Huai-nan, Ho-pei, and Ching-tung. See Wang Tseng-yü, "Wang An-shih pien-fa chien-lun," p. 143, and Saeki Tomi, "So⁻dai ni okeru cho⁻ho⁻ chibun ni tsuite," in his Chu⁻gokushi kenkyu (Kyoto, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 464-8.

its military power" (fu-kuo ch'iang-ping) that came to define the substance -- and the tragedy -- of the "new policies" (hsin-fa).¹²³

Wang An-shih's own focus was on the economy. In his "Myriad Word Memorial" of 1058, Wang had identified bureaucratic rejuvenation as the key to social, military, and economic renaissance: create a bureaucracy of ideologically uniform but highly motivated specialists drawn from all segments of the society, and all the other problems facing the empire will fall into place. By the time he assumed power under Shen-tsung, however, a decade of fiscal crisis had altered the balance to make the "management of resources" (li-ts'ai) the defining feature of the art of government, and economic rejuvenation the paramount concern of the day. This was the bridle Wang repeatedly used to restrain Shen-tsung from precipitately pursuing his own ambition -- an irredentist war: "The reason we have not yet begun our [great] enterprise (chü-shih)," Wang advised the emperor in 1071, "is because our financial resources are inadequate. That is why I say that the management of resources (li-ts'ai) is our most urgent priority."¹²⁴

Wang An-shih's economic thought

Wang's emphasis on finance was not surprising. By the late 1060s even men who were to part company over the New Policies could agree that both the finances of the state and the prosperity of the economy were imperilled. Just after Ying-tsung's death in 1067 Han Chiang and Chang Fang-p'ing, soon to be in opposite political camps, sent up a joint memorial declaring that in order to ensure the livelihoods of the people and the very foundation of the state nothing was more essential than getting the nation's financial affairs in order.¹²⁵ But the relatively large arena of shared economic opinion that

¹²³ For Ssu-ma Kuang, the definitive components of the New Policies were the green sprouts (ch'ing-miao), hired service or service exemption (ku-i, mu-i, mien-i), state trade (shih-i), and mutual security (pao-chia) measures, the large-scale irrigation projects, and the disruptive frontier campaigns: see, for example, his "Memorial in response to the Court's order for criticism of its failures" (ying chao yen ch'ao-cheng ch'üeh-shih chuang) of 1074, in SMWC, 45, pp. 574-5. The authors of the Sung-shih identify the "new policies" as nung-t'ien shui-li (agricultural lands and irrigation), ch'ing-miao (green sprouts), chün-shu (equalized tribute and transportation), pao-chia (mutual security), mien-i/mu-i (service exemption or hired service), shih-i (state trade), pao-ma (mutual security horse pasturage) and fang-t'ien ('square fields' land survey). See SS, 327, p. 10544.

¹²⁴ HCP, 220, p. 5351. For other statements on the primacy of finance see also "Ta Tseng Kung-li shu," Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi 73, p. 464, cited in James Liu, Reform in Sung China, p. 50. As Ch'i Hsia points out, Wang ascribed his emphasis on finance to the Rites of Chou (Chou-li), "half of which," wrote Wang, "is concerned with the management of resources." See Sung-tai ching-chi shih, Vol. 2, p. 1149. Ch'i Hsia analyses Wang's economic thought in general on pp. 1142-52.

¹²⁵ HCP, 209, pp. 5074-5.

characterized the 1050s and 1060s was to shrink with the onset of the New Policies, when disagreements became much more sharply pronounced.¹²⁶ As the reform agenda began to take shape, a conservative fiscal position emerged that clustered around three main points. First, conservatives such as Ssu-ma Kuang held that "the production of heaven and earth is constant;" that is, despite increases in the size of the population (as Ssu-ma Kuang acknowledged) the size of the economic pie remained relatively fixed.¹²⁷ Second, although fate, natural endowment, and the inelasticity of economic output used great inequalities in wealth, conservatives such as Ssu-ma Kuang, Su Hsün, Su Ch'e, Cheng Hsia, Fan Chen, and others insisted that the relationship between rich and poor was both benign and mutually beneficial: the wealthy served as the pillars of local society and the state and as the providers of capital (land and credit) and security to the poor, who in turn assisted the wealthy with their labor.¹²⁸ And third, the fixed size of the economic pie defined the proper relationship between the economy and the state: the economy functioned best when it was least burdened by the government. Although conservatives acknowledged that economy and fisc were both in crisis, that crisis was caused solely by the irresponsible spending of the state. Because of the inelasticity of economic output, there was no way to increase government revenues beyond traditional limits (which Chang Fang-p'ing defined as the land tax, taxes on the products of the mountains and the marshes, and commercial taxes assessed on goods in transit and at the point of sale¹²⁹) without in turn decreasing the incomes of the people. In fact the way to increase the prosperity of the nation, wrote Su Ch'e in the memorial that earned him a temporary position on the Finance Planning Commission, is not to demand more wealth (in the form of taxes), but rather to root out those things that harm the formation of wealth in the first place: excess officials, excess troops, and excess expenditures.¹³⁰ Ssu-ma Kuang made the same point even more forcefully in a debate with Wang An-shih before the emperor, where he reiterated his view that "the output of the world in money and goods is of a fixed and definite amount. If it is in the hands of the state then it is not in the hands of the people." And he remedied Shen-tsung of the lesson learned by Han Wu-ti when he let himself be deluded by Sang-hung Yang: when the state extracts wealth from the people, "bandits swarm like wasps."¹³¹

¹²⁶ During the 1060s Ssu-ma Kuang promoted many of the same ideas on finance as Wang An-shih, and even anticipated key aspects of the reforms. See, for example, his memorial on finance from 1062 entitled "Lun ts'ai-li shu" (On wealth and profit), SMWC, 25, pp. 353-62, analysed by Peter Bol in "Government, Society, and the State."

¹²⁷ SMWC, 25, p. 361.

¹²⁸ For a survey of conservative views on the harmonious relationship between rich and poor see Ch'i Hsia, Sung-tai ching-chi-shih, Vol. 2, pp. 1163-8.

¹²⁹ See his memorial "Lun lu-ch'ien mu-i shih," quoted in HCP, 277, p. 6787.

¹³⁰ CPPM, 66, p. 2096.

¹³¹ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Er-ying tsou-tui," SMWC, 42, pp. 543-5; CPPM, 57, pp. 1840-5.

The reformers harbored an entirely more robust view of the economy. By the mid-eleventh century China could no longer be characterized by the relatively closed natural economy envisioned by the conservatives. Particularly in South China, commerce had increasingly transformed economic relations, breaking down self sufficiency and fostering regional specialization and household production for and reliance on the market. And with commerce came a concomitant expansion in the role of money as a medium of exchange for goods and services. Though Northern Sung finance officials may have been relatively slow to recognize the distinctive properties of money, which they lumped with such commodities as grain and textiles in their statistical summaries of national income and expenditure, by Shen-tsung's reign the reformers seemed more attuned to the unique role of money as an exchange medium and unit of value.¹³² If anything the reformers exaggerated the role of money in the Chinese economy, mesmerized as they were by the ways that money multiplied itself through commercial transactions and interest on loans. And it was this very multiplication that caught their attention, and distinguished the reformers from the conservatives: for whereas conservatives viewed the economy as static, the reformers saw the economy as dynamic and expanding. In yet another strict contrast with the conservatives, who saw the state as the greatest single threat to economic well-being, the reformers held that economic dynamism could only be sustained by the involvement of the state. As early as 1058 Wang insisted that it was the responsibility of public finance (*chih-ts'ai*) "to utilize the energy of all under heaven to produce wealth for all under heaven, and to use the wealth of all under heaven to meet the needs of all under heaven."¹³³ Just one year later Wang memorialized that "If the state improves its institutions so as to make the [productive] base grow strong and the [consumer] end diminish, then the wealth of the country will be so great that no matter how much the state uses it cannot possibly exhaust all of it."¹³⁴ And in his debate with Ssu-ma Kuang before the emperor, Wang argued that in a fiscal system run by "men who are skilled at finance (*shan li-ts'ai che*)" it was possible to "secure a surplus for the state without increasing the tax burden on the people."¹³⁵

¹³² The *locus classicus* on commerce in Sung China remains Shiba Yoshinobu, *So dai sho gyo shi kenkyu* (Tokyo, 1968), which should now be supplemented by his *So dai ko nan keizaishi no kenkyu* (Tokyo, 1988), and Ch'i Hsia's *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*. Higashi Ichio discusses the importance of commerce and monetization to understanding the New Policies in *O Anseki shimpo*, pp. 113-71. On the propensity to lump money with other commodities see Miyazawa Tomoyuki, "Hokuso no zaisei to kahei keizai," in Chugokushi kenkyu kai, ed., *Chugoku senseikokka to shakaito go* (Kyoto, 1990), pp. 281-332.

¹³³ *Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi*, 39, pp. 222-3.

¹³⁴ *Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi*, 70, p. 444, "I ch'a-fa," quoted by James Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, p. 50.

¹³⁵ *CPPM*, 57, p. 1843. Ssu-ma Kuang predicted that it was these very finance experts who would drive the people into poverty and banditry.

Skilled financial officials were needed in order to counter the aggrandizing instincts of the rich and powerful. Here was a third key distinction between conservative and reform visions of the economy, for instead of the benign, mutually beneficial relationships between rich and poor identified by the conservatives, the reformers saw the economic landscape as dominated by coercive and predatory "engrossers" (chien-ping), magnates who preyed on the poor and usurped the fiscal prerogatives of the state. Wang had associated himself with this anti-engrosser sentiment, which reached all the way back to Hsün-tzu (fl. 298-238 B.C.), as early as 1053, in a poem denouncing the "wicked engrossers" who had ensnared the wealth of the empire and encroached on the authority of the monarch, thus shattering the ancient unity between public (kung) and private (ssu) wealth.¹³⁶ In the idealized Chou period that served as Wang's model, the former kings delegated the protection of the public interest from private encroachment to their Treasury Officers (ch'üan-fu), who "controlled and regulated would-be engrossers, measured and equalized the differences between rich and poor, transformed and circulated the wealth of all under heaven, and caused the benefits to all flow from a single source."¹³⁷ For Wang, the contemporary analog of the Treasury Officer was the well-trained, virtually heroic financial specialist, upholding the power of the state to protect the common good. Nowhere did he make this clearer than in an encomium of about 1060 to the Officers of Funds (tu-chih fu-shih) of the past:

Now it is wealth that holds all the people of the world together, laws that bring order to the empire's wealth, and officials who uphold the empire's laws. If the officials are inadequate then though there are laws they will not be upheld; if the laws are not good then though there is wealth it won't be put in order. And if there is wealth but it is not regulated, then churlish people in the villages and towns will all be able to capture the power to collect and disburse for themselves and to usurp the benefits of the myriad things, in competition with the monarch. . . . Not even Yao and Shun of high antiquity could avoid making it their most urgent priority to improve the laws and appoint officials to uphold them in order to regulate the wealth of all under heaven.¹³⁸

But the task of regulating wealth and restraining the engrossers was made more difficult by their very ubiquity. In 1072, for example, Wang complained that:

In each and every district and prefecture there are "engrosser" families who do nothing but collect interest of tens of thousands of strings of cash

¹³⁶ See Wang's poem, "The Engrossers," in Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 5, p. 22.

¹³⁷ HCP shih-pu, 4, pp. 5a-b.

¹³⁸ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 82, pp. 521-2, "Tu-chih fu-shih t'ing-pi t'i-ming chi," cited by Liang Keng-yao, "Shi-i-fa shu," p. 178.

each year. Aside from violating and devouring the masses and tax-paying households to enhance their spendthrift extravagance, what do they do for the country to deserve such rich rewards?¹³⁹

Because there were too few officials trained in the techniques of economic management, the state had forfeited its regulatory authority to the ubiquitous predatory rich. Wang highlighted this point in 1069.2, in the plea for establishing the Finance Planning Commission that inaugurated the New Policies. There Wang emphasized that because incompetent officials relied on an outmoded and inflexible command structure to siphon off goods and services from a complex market-oriented economy, "most of the commodities used by the court are levied from places where they are not produced, or demanded before their season. Wealthy merchants and great traders have taken advantage of the crises this causes both public and private interests to usurp control over the ratios of exchange (ch'ing-chung) and the collection and disbursement of money and goods."¹⁴⁰ Because Sung financial institutions lagged behind changes in the economy, well-capitalized merchants were handed rich opportunities to profit from the gap between outmoded quotas and economic reality.

In order to close this gap and reestablish "public authority over the ratios of exchange and the collection and disbursement of money and goods," Wang proposed to use the new Finance Planning Commission to spearhead intensified state participation in the market economy. This commitment to expanding the scope of state power was doubly controversial. First, in direct contrast with Shen-tsung's conservative advisors, Wang openly counselled expanding rather than pruning the bureaucracy as a means of stimulating economic activity and generating greater revenues. In his very first month in the Council of State, Wang wrote that "only with many officials can essential tasks be accomplished. So long as these tasks are accomplished there is nothing wrong with official activity. And large expenditures will stimulate the production of wealth. So long as they stimulate prosperity, what is the harm in great expenditures?"¹⁴¹ As proof of Wang's intent, under his direction the number of qualified officials registered the greatest

¹³⁹ HCP, 240, pp. 5829, 1072.11.

¹⁴⁰ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 70, p. 445, "Ch'i chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li."

¹⁴¹ Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 62, p. 391, "K'an-hsiang tsa-i," (a series of responses to imperial queries) quoted by James Liu, Reform in Sung China, p.48. Wang repeated his argument in 1074, when he instructed Shen-tsung in the economic benefits of appointing additional officials to administer the labor exemption funds: "The number of [county-level] officials in charge of distribution and collection of the labor exemption and ever-normal funds does not exceed 500 men, with combined salaries of no more than 100,000 strings annually. This year profits [from the two accounts] reached 3 million strings, at a [total administrative] cost of but 300,000 strings. Establishing new offices does not lead to unnecessary expenses." HCP, 250, p. 6095.

increase of the entire dynasty, jumping 41 percent from 24,000 men in 1067 to over 34,000 men in 1080.¹⁴²

Second, if the state were to compete successfully with powerful private interests in the expanding market place, then it was not enough simply to make government larger: the agents of the state had to think and act not like rule-bound bureaucrats, but like innovative entrepreneurs. As Wang had argued in 1058, this meant selecting men for office based on their skills rather than their formal credentials, and then granting them the degree of authority and autonomy needed to perform their intended tasks free of bureaucratic interference. Shen-tsung must have found Wang's argument persuasive, for as the author of the Ch'ang-pien wryly observed, "the emperor tested talented men from all over the empire in governmental affairs, even reaching down to the most distant commoners. If a prefectural or county clerk made a few useful remarks, without even knowing him [the emperor] would pluck him up and in less than a day he would be appointed an imperial attendant. . . ."¹⁴³ Even more galling to the New Policies critics was Wang's employment of "anyone with an opinion on finance, from traveling merchant to market trader to butcher."¹⁴⁴ These potential bureaucratic entrepreneurs -- or "mean-med practitioners of profit" as their opponents called them -- were assigned to the panoply of new Intendancies created to extend the economic power of the state, and granted unusual autonomy over their own operations. In the case of such price-equalizing institutions as the Ever-Normal granaries, officials were encouraged "to imitate the activities of the [very merchants whose price-gauging they were seeking to break] and call it 'the art of enriching the nation.'"¹⁴⁵ And in the new state-run commercial enterprises that were spawned by the New Policies, especially the State Trade Agency, merchants were routinely given official positions.¹⁴⁶

Wang charged his expanded corps of financial specialists with two specific tasks: rationalizing the state's financial operations and displacing the engrossers from their monopolistic positions. The key element of financial rationalization was to put money at the center of the relationship between the state and the economy. The first policy to

¹⁴² See John Chaffee, The thorny gates of learning, p. 27, Table 4.

¹⁴³ The editorial comment is appended to an order promoting an imperial affine, Hsiang Ching. See CPPM, 81, p. 2596.

¹⁴⁴ HCP, 225, p. 5484. The complaint was by Liu Chih, as he was driven from the censorate because of his opposition to the hired service policy. In 1075 even Han Chiang complained when Wang appointed the "mean-med practitioner of profit" Liu Tso the head the state trade agency. But Wang An-shih responded that "If a state trade official is not expert in matters of profit, how then can he manage [the affairs of the Agency]?" HCP, 264, p. 6468.

¹⁴⁵ Ma Tuan-lin, Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao, author's introduction, p. 5a.

¹⁴⁶ The State Trade Agency is discussed below.

come out of the Finance Planning Commission, the Tribute Transport and Distribution measure (chün-shu fa), proposed to replace to the clumsy command extraction of goods with a market-oriented procurement system that authorized the Transport Intendant (fa-yun shih) to buy necessities and sell surpluses on the market.¹⁴⁷ Although the policy was in the end aborted other key measures, including State Trade, Hired Service, and Green Sprouts, inherited its monetizing thrust (see below).

This fiscal accommodation to the role of money in the economy was also meant to promote the state's second objective, displacing the engrossers. Under Wang's prodding, "smashing the engrossers" (ts'ui chien-ping) became the ideological foundation of the New Policies, and the magic key to enriching the state. In one exhortation after another Wang urged Shen-tsung to see smashing the engrossers as the very foundation of his reforms: "Heaven devolved the Nine Continents and Four Seas on the Emperor just so he could suppress the great and the powerful, raise the poor and the weak, and enable poor and rich alike to enjoy the benefits [of his rule]."¹⁴⁸ In particular, he insisted that suppressing the engrossers was the key to financing Shen-tsung's longed-for frontier campaigns: for just as financial reforms were the prerequisite to subduing the Tanguts and the Liao, revitalizing the peasant economy lay at the heart of financial reform, "and in order to eradicate the burdens on the peasantry we must suppress the engrossers"¹⁴⁹ Yet while the rewards of smashing the engrossers were great, Wang warned that completely destroying their power would be difficult:

The Ch'in was able to unify the Six Kingdoms but even they could not control the engrossers, and in fact they even erected a memorial to the rich Widow Ch'ing. From the Ch'in to the present no one has known how to smash and control the engrossers. But [I] believe that if the engrossers could be smashed and controlled then the state's revenues would meet its needs and there would be no need to worry about inadequate resources.¹⁵⁰

Enacting the economic reforms

At its broadest, then, Wang's economic policy was animated by the conviction that by charging financial specialists to rationalize and expand the presence of the state in the monetized, commercialized economy, government agents could appropriate the illicit profits of the engrossers in order to assist the poor, stimulate production, and enhance government revenues without increasing the tax burdens on the people. Under the

¹⁴⁷ Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, pp. 153-157; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i-fa shu," pp. 180-181.

¹⁴⁸ HCP, 232, p. 5641.

¹⁴⁹ HCP, 220, p. 5351.

¹⁵⁰ HCP, 262, pp. 6407, 1075.4; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i-fa shu," p. 223.

direction of the Finance Planning Commission and its successor, the Court of Agricultural Supervision, Wang's economic corps did realize several significant successes. The many water-control projects pursued as part of the policy to promote land development and irrigation (nung-t'ien shui-li fa) certainly provided a direct stimulus to agricultural productivity. Between 1070 and 1076 the reform administration initiated 10,793 water-control and land reclamation projects around the empire that reclaimed a total of 361,178 ch'ing 88 mu (approximately 38,829,779 acres) of agricultural land. In addition, such Directors of Waterways (tu shui-chien) as Ch'eng Fang and Hou Shu-hsien contributed to both productivity and fiscal solvency by remedying flood control and conservancy problems along the Yellow River and the Pien Canal.¹⁵¹

The redistributive goal of the reformers was most closely approximated in the "land survey and equitable tax measure" (fang-t'ien chün-shui fa) enacted in the "five [northern] circuits" (wu-lu) of the Ho-pei East and West, Ho-tung, and Shan-hsi's Yung-hsing-chün and Ch'in-feng. Initiated in 1072.8, the new measure sought to redistribute some of the tax burden that had been sloughed off onto small, politically powerless landowners by the powerful "official families and families of substance" (kuan-hu hsing-shih-hu) whose large landownings were protected by tax exemptions. In a concession to powerful landowners that would later be followed by early Ch'ing rulers, the reformers traded the promise of readjustment but no total tax increase for the right to institute a new series of cadastral surveys. Although this concession preempted any increase in the total land tax from the five northern circuits, by the time the policy was rescinded in 1085 a reported 2,484,349 ch'ing (ca. 34.7 million acres) of land -- 54 percent of the national total of 4.6 million ch'ing as of 1082 -- had been revealed. And while the overall impact of the measure is difficult to assess, it is quite possible that the exposure of these previously untaxed lands allowed some shifting of the tax burden away from poor northern households already encumbered by the severe labor service (fu-i) burdens occasioned by militarization of the borders with the Liao and Hsi Hsia.¹⁵²

Ultimately, however, the redistributive and productivity goals that gave the New Policies their moral persuasiveness were overwhelmed by the state's fiscal imperatives. One after another, policies that began as efforts to rationalize the mobilization of goods

¹⁵¹ For sources and discussion of New Policies water-control measures see Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 394-509, and Mira Mihelich, "Polders and the politics of land reclamation," pp. 48-118. For a tabulation by region of the figures on reform water-control projects (from SHY, shih-huo 61, pp. 68a-70b), see Higashi, p. 509.

¹⁵² Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, pp. 144-7; Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 815-88; Sudo Yoshiyuki, "O⁻ Anseki no shimpo⁻ to sono shiteki yigi," pp. 11-14. Wang Tseng-yu, "Wang An-shih pien-fa chien-lun," p. 146, doubts the validity of the figure of 2.4 million ch'ing. Higashi, pp. 869-70, takes another tack, by noting that WHTK author, Ma Tuan-lin, doubted the validity of the figure for total acreage of 4.6 million ch'ing, suspecting that the real arable amount was more like 30 million ch'ing: WHTK, 4, p. 59b. If Ma Tuan-lin is correct, the amount of land uncovered in the north suggests what kind of inroads the state might have made had it been able to extend its policy to the south as well.

and services, assist poor peasants, equalize tax burdens, or break commercial monopolies were metamorphosed into the claws of a predatory bureaucracy whose sole purpose was to gouge new revenues out of the economy. These policies did indeed enrich the state, but only at great political and economic cost. For not only did the fiscalization of the reforms undermine broader economic objectives, it also produced a sharp backlash that turned reformers as well as conservatives against the New Policies, first bringing down Wang An-shih and then the reform movement as a whole. Because this transformation of redistributive policies into unbridled revenue extraction shaped the final outcome of the reforms, it is worth examining in detail the four measures most thoroughly tarred with the fiscalist brush: green sprouts, hired service, state trade, and mutual security -- a local militia system that was ultimately turned by exigency and opportunity into the tax collection arm of the state.

Rural credit (ch'ing-miao) and hired service (mu-i, mien-i)

The economic reforms as a whole drew heavily on experiments undertaken locally during Jen-tsung's reign, and Wang An-shih had himself devised a prototype of the green sprouts rural credit measure. The green sprouts policy took aim at the inequalities created by the progressive monetization of the economy. As land and the entire agrarian regime were drawn deeper into the commercial vortex, the peasant's ability to hold onto his land came to depend increasingly on his access to money and credit. The enveloping cash nexus fostered a cycle of rural debt and propertylessness that seemed to be intensifying throughout the eleventh century. By mid-century roughly eighty percent of the ten million rural landowning households (that is, resident -- chu-hu -- versus "guest" or tenant -- ko-hu -- households) were ranked in the lowest two grades (4 and 5) of a hierarchy consisting of five grades of commoners and a single grade of officials, and possessed only about twenty-two percent of the empire's cultivated lands. With average holdings of just fifteen mu (ca. two acres), roughly three mu less than was needed to feed a family of five, these households lived at the margins of economic dependence: not only were they often forced to supplement their incomes as hired laborers or tenants on other people's lands, but "[m]any of them were chronically in debt, and mounting debts led all too often to forced sale or foreclosure of their land."¹⁵³

Forced sales and debt foreclosures presented problems for the state as well as the peasantry, since propertylessness and the concentration of land ownership increased the possibilities of rural unrest and diminished the state's access to the taxes and labor of the peasantry. Up through the eighth century the principal lever utilized by the state to protect peasant solvency and dependence involved periodic land redistribution, but even Wang An-shih admitted that the state no longer possessed the power to reestablish the old

¹⁵³ Peter Golas, "Rural China in the Song", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 39, No. 2 (1980), pp. 302-4. As of 1075, the population consisted of 10.6 million chu-hu and 5 million k'e-hu. See Ch'i Hsia, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, Vol. 1, p. 47. The household categories raise a number of descriptive and analytical problems and have spawned a considerable literature, which Golas surveys on pp. 305-9. Much of this discussion of the green sprouts policy is drawn from Smith, "State power and economic activism."

land-equalizing measures.¹⁵⁴ Instead Wang and like-med reformers came to view rural credit as the fulcrum through which state power could best protect the peasantry.

The most vulnerable time for peasants fell in the lean months between consumption of the previous year's crop and the planting and harvest of the new crop, when peasants were forced to borrow food and seed grain or the cash to buy it. Sometime in the 1040s the Shan-hsi finance official Li Ts'an devised a policy that incidentally filled this credit gap by making advance payments of "green sprouts cash" (ch'ing-miao ch'ien) to peasants in the off-season for the purchase of grain at harvest time. Although Li Ts'an's measure lent its name to the later measure, it was more intended to assure a reliable supply of grain for the army than to remedy rural distress.¹⁵⁵ But Wang An-shih did target the credit squeeze during his term as magistrate of Yin County (Liang-che) around 1049, though instead of paying cash for future crops he lent grain for immediate needs, allowing lenders to redeem their loans with interest at harvest time.¹⁵⁶ Wang An-shih's measure was well received locally and he revived the plan very soon after joining the Council of State in early 1069, this time replacing grain with interest-bearing loans of "green sprouts cash." With Wang and his coalition not yet in firm control, Su Ch'e was able to block this first green sprouts proposal. But shortly thereafter Wang Kuang-lien, a managing supervisor in the Ho-pei Fiscal Intendancy, requested permission to sell several thousand ordination certificates in order to capitalize a green sprouts loan policy in Shan-hsi, and this time Wang and his lieutenant Lü Hui-ch'ing were strong enough to force adoption of the "Shan-hsi green sprouts loan act" on a regional, experimental basis.¹⁵⁷

By the 9th month of 1069 the reformers were ready to push for empire-wide enactment of the measure, which they advertised as an attack on the monopoly over agricultural credit enjoyed by the rural "engrossers:"

The reason people are burdened by deficits is because in that seasonal gap separating the old harvest from the new, engrossing households take advantage of the crisis to demand interest rates of 100 percent. Consequently would-be borrowers are often denied the funds they need.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ HCP, 223, p. 5419.

¹⁵⁵ SS, 330, p. 10619; Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 546-8.

¹⁵⁶ SS, 327, p. 10541; Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 548-50.

¹⁵⁷ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 17a-b; Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 550-2.

¹⁵⁸ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 16a. This key text, which comprises the basic legislation for the ch'ing-miao policy, is analysed by Sudo Yoshiyuki, "O⁻ Anseki no seibyoho no shiko katei," To⁻yo⁻ daigaku daigakuin kiyō, 8 (1972), pp. 172-4.

In order to break this private credit monopoly the reformers proposed to create a state-run rural credit system, to be capitalized by liquidating the 15 million piculs of grain and strings of cash that sat idly in the moribund system of Ever-normal (ch'ang-p'ing) and Universal Charity (kuang-hui) granaries. Traditionally the Ever-normal Granaries were authorized to buy up grains when prices were cheap for resale when prices were dear, or in times of natural disaster. By the onset of Shen-tsung's reign however the system had become so cumbersome that the mechanism had ceased to work effectively, and stocks were rarely circulated.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless these idle grain reserves represented an enormous capitalizing potential, and in its directive the Commission proposed a simultaneous solution to the problems of price equalization, disaster relief, and seasonal credit crises that transformed the nation's granary stocks into a 'Green Sprouts' fund for rural investment. Control of the granaries was transferred from the circuit judicial intendants to the new satellites of the Finance Planning Commission, the circuit Intendants for Ever-normal Granaries, who were empowered to convert the reserves into a liquid loan fund that would be administered by county magistrates and local village officers.¹⁶⁰ The loans were to be made in the spring and repaid in two installments after taxes in the summer and fall, and a series of rules were established to protect borrowers against unfair manipulation by officials. For example, loans could be repaid in either currency or grain, with exchange rates set to ensure only that the government lost none of its basic capitalization (pen-ch'ien), and forced loans (i-p'ei) were expressly prohibited.

Nothing less than a complete rejuvenation of the agrarian economy was expected from the new measure, which was perceived as a means of rationalizing the distribution and collection of grain and money to equalize commodity prices, minimize the unequal geographic distribution of resources, and ensure adequate supplies of relief grain. The policy's authors likened it to the measures by which the ancient kings "aided agriculture, equalized wealth, and prevented the powerful from plundering the people," for by supplanting private landlords and moneylenders as the principal source of rural credit, the state could "enable the peasants to hasten to the management of their affairs so that monopolist households will be unable to take advantage of their crises." Above all, the Finance Planning Commission disavowed any fiscal interest in the measure, insisting that "the loan policy is for the sake of the people; the government (kung-chia) will claim no benefit from its receipts."¹⁶¹

The stated objectives of the green sprouts policy, then, were explicitly redistributionist: the establishment of a state-run rural credit system that would keep the two poorest grades of landowning peasants solvent, by breaking their dependence on usurious rural money-lenders. But poor property-owners were not the only endangered segment of the landed population. By the mid eleventh century the three highest grades,

¹⁵⁹ On the granary systems see SS, 176, pp. 4275-91.

¹⁶⁰ For details of the administration see SHY, shih-huo 4 and 5, and Smith, "State power."

¹⁶¹ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 16b.

comprising the very middle to wealthy peasants who in other contexts could be labelled "engrossers," were also showing signs of vulnerability. For while the roughly twenty percent of all landed peasants in these three upper grades might enjoy adequate lands and financial resources, their very prosperity made them eligible for a variety of burdensome and often ruinous government obligations. Because the traditional Chinese state never had the financial or organizational resources to expand its bureaucratic tendrils below the county level it was forced to conscript local villagers into fulfilling those functions on which its very survival depended, especially tax collection and local security. On the eve of the New Policies the principal village positions included the Household Chiefs (hu-chang) and Canton Scribes (hsiang shu-shou), responsible for tax assessment and collections, and the Village Elders (ch'i-chiang) and Stalwart Men or guardsmen (chuang-ting), responsible for local security. Incumbents for these posts were mustered through the "drafted service system" (ch'ai-i fa), which conscripted villagers for fixed terms into posts requiring resources appropriate to their household grade.¹⁶²

Although the tax officials, particularly after 1055 the Household Chiefs, were obliged to make up shortfalls below quota out of their own incomes, on the whole village service did not become particularly onerous until the financial and military collapse of the Northern Sung. Much more burdensome was the stipulation that after completing their local duties village servicemen could be drafted into "government service" (chih-i) attached to the county and prefectural yamen. These official posts, which numbered over a million at any one time, included office messengers (ch'eng-fu) and miscellaneous servants (san-ts'ung kuan), book-keepers (tien-li) and scribes (shu-piao shih), a wide variety of granary and supply functionaries and laborers (k'u-tzu, t'ou-tzu, jen-li), yamen police for the arrest of thieves (kung-shou) and people charged in suits (yü-hou). But the most onerous post was that of Supply Master (ya-ch'ien).¹⁶³ Drafted from the wealthiest households, the supply masters were responsible for managing government granaries, hosting prefectural guests, and two functions that required extensive travel: accompanying civil officials to and from office and overseeing the transmission of taxes and tribute goods from their local yamen to designated destinations throughout the

¹⁶² Though the periodical literature on local government service during the Sung is growing steadily, among the standard works that still demand attention are Sogabe Shizuo, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakuho⁻," in his So⁻dai zaiseishi (Tokyo, 1941), pp. 143-98; Sudo Yoshiyuki, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen cho⁻shu⁻ no sho mondai," in his So⁻daishi kenkyu⁻ (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 189-259, the main points of which are summarized in his "O⁻ Anseki no shimpo⁻ to sono shiteki yigi," So⁻daishi kenkyu⁻, pp. 1-26; Nieh Ch'ung-ch'i, "Sung i-fa shu," rpt. in his Sung-shi ts'ung-k'ao, (Peking, 1980), pp. 1-70; James Liu, Reform in Sung China, pp. 98-113; and Brian McKnight, Village and bureaucracy in Southern Sung China (Chicago, 1971), esp. pp. 20-37. For a more recent example see Yü Tsung-hsien, "Lun Wang An-shih mien-i fa," in Chuang Chao, ed., Sung-shih lun-chi (Honan, 1983), pp. 107-23.

¹⁶³ James Liu, Reform in Sung China, pp. 100-1; McKnight, Village and bureaucracy, pp. 23-5; Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no shimpo⁻ to sono shiteki yigi," pp. 4-5.

empire, including the capital.¹⁶⁴ During the course of the eleventh century the supply master's post became semi-professionalized in the most commercially advanced regions of the empire, such as Chiang-nan and parts of Szechwan; there volunteers (called t'ou-ming ya-ch'ien or ch'ang-ming ya-ch'ien) were reimbursed with the rights to manage government ferry crossings (he-tu) and wine-mash franchises (fang-ch'ang), and might profit handsomely from their enterprises. But in most parts of the country the post was filled by unremunerated conscripts who were ill-prepared to finance their long trips to the capital, bribe clerks to accept their shipments, or to cover the costs of goods lost or damaged in transit.¹⁶⁵

Shen-tsung's accession was accompanied by a flurry of memorials calling for reform of the government service draft, especially the supply master system. Early in 1067 Han Chiang, as Finance Commissioner, memorialized that the supply master conscription was the single greatest threat to peasant productivity. A single term, lasting two to three years, could prove so costly to the incumbent (up to one thousand strings of cash in one report) that eligible household heads would commit suicide, break up their families, or sell or abandon their lands in order to lower their household grade. Most importantly, the threat of conscription was a disincentive to agricultural investment: "people rely on the productivity of the land for their livelihoods. But now if they exhaust themselves to succeed, once they have attained a certain level of prosperity they are hit with drafted service. If we want to encourage more people to farm and more lands to be opened, then how can this situation be tolerated?"¹⁶⁶ A year later Wu Ch'ung described how once an upper-grade family was assigned supply master duties an official arrived at their door to register all their belongings, from cups and pestles to baskets and chopsticks, to be counted against losses incurred in service. Wu Ch'ung complained that "it even gets to the point that when household property is exhausted, but the debts not yet requited, then the children and grandchildren are in turn impoverished and neighboring guarantors sought out. Therefore in order to avoid ruinous draft service the people do not dare to cultivate much land so as to avoid high household rank, and men of the same bones and flesh do not dare live together out of fear of raising their eligibility for corvee." And he emphasized that since supply master service was destroying the upper-grade families the duties had to be pushed down onto poorer households even less able to bear

¹⁶⁴ Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no shimpo⁻ to sono shiteki yigi," p. 4. See also his "So⁻dai shuken no shokuyaku to shuri no hatten," in his So⁻dai keizaishi kenkyu⁻ (Tokyo, 1962), esp. pp. 661-704. For a more recent discussion see parts 1 and 2 of Wang Tseng-yu's "Sung ya-ch'ien tsa-lun," Pei-ching shih-yüan hsüeh-pao, 3 (1986), pp. 76-82; and 1 (1987), pp. 49-57.

¹⁶⁵ McKnight, Village and bureaucracy, p. 26. On volunteers, see Sudo, So⁻dai keizaishi kenkyu⁻, p. 662 ff. For a useful summary of how the government controlled wine manufacture and distribution during the Sung, see Ch'i Hsia, Sung-tai ching-chi shih, pp. 875-904.

¹⁶⁶ SHY, shih-huo 65, p. 1a-b. The figure of one thousand strings per term is supplied by Teng Wan: HCP, 227, pp. 5522-3.

the costs, a process that inevitably squeezed peasants out of farming and even into vagrancy.¹⁶⁷

Reports such as these from his father's senior officials moved Shen-tsung to call for urgent action on the government service draft. Drafted service had received far more attention than rural credit over the years, and Shen-tsung's policy makers could draw upon a long if ultimately unsuccessful history of reform precedents. In 1022, for example, a group of officials recommended that limits be placed on the amount of land officials could keep exempt from financial obligations, in order to expand the tax base for local services and restrict official families' (kuan-hu) engrossment of land.¹⁶⁸ The 1030s saw the first local attempts to levy special taxes to subsidize the hiring of volunteer supply masters, including the imposition in 1041 of a service-exemption fee (mien-i ch'ien) in Ching-hu South Circuit.¹⁶⁹ And in the decade prior to the New Policies both Tseng Kung and Ssu-ma Kuang -- who was to vehemently oppose the service exemption (mien-i) policy -- proposed utilizing income from the wine monopoly, supplemented by imposts on the rural or urban rich, to create a fund for compensating hired government servicemen.¹⁷⁰

But government service reforms encountered far more opposition than reform of the rural credit system. For whereas the green sprouts credit mechanism competed with private money lenders it did not impose any new costs on the wealthy -- and wealthy families soon became eligible for loans themselves. All of the proposed solutions to the drafted service problem, however, shifted part of the burden to families who had previously been exempt by law, such as officials and town-dwellers, or by practice, such as the powerful local families whose influence over government clerks gave them de facto immunity from conscription.¹⁷¹ Consequently reform of the drafted service system was touted as an anti-engrosser issue, even though the beneficiaries of reform were in the highest household categories.¹⁷²

Precisely because drafted service reform did challenge powerful entrenched interests in a way that the green sprouts measure did not, it took a much longer time to enact a workable policy. In the last month of 1069 -- a year and a half after Shen-tsung's first calls for action -- the Finance Planning Commission produced a proposal to replace

¹⁶⁷ SHYshih-huo 65, pp. 2a-b.

¹⁶⁸ McKnight, pp. 27-8; WHTK, 12, pp. 128c-9a.

¹⁶⁹ McKnight, p. 30; WHTK, 12, p. 129a; HCP, 133, p. 1b.

¹⁷⁰ McKnight, p. 31, citing SS, 319, p. 10390; HCP, 196, p. 17a-b. .

¹⁷¹ See Teng Wan's description in HCP, 227, p. 5522.

¹⁷² For Wang An-shih's comments see HCP, 220, p. 5351; 223, p. 5427.

government service conscripts with paid volunteers.¹⁷³ The funds to pay this new semi-professionalized corps were to come from three sources: a tax on the households eligible for drafted service, called either a service-exemption (mien-i) or hired-service (mu-i) fee, graduated according to their assessed wealth; the auctioning off of franchises to manage the state's 26,000 wine and ferry installations for a fixed period;¹⁷⁴ and the imposition of a tax, called a "service assistance fee" (chu-i ch'ien), on all households with property and wealth but not themselves liable for service. This last innovation was the most politically daring, although it too had been raised before. Some of those now taxed in this new category, such as households with no taxable males (ting), or only a single taxable male, or headed by a woman, did not necessarily wield much power on their own. But the inclusion of all urban households, households of Buddhist and Taoist temples, and particularly the households of ranked officials directly challenged a very influential constituency. In addition to putting government service on a paid, volunteer basis, the Commissioners called for an overall reduction in the number of service positions needed in long-distance transport, and a prohibition of the many abuses and expenses to which supply masters in transit were liable.

The Commission's proposal contained all but two elements of the final policy -- the k'uan-sheng ch'ien (surplus emergency fee) surtax and an explicit levy on the lowest-grade households -- but it was only an "instruction," sent to ever-normal granary intendants, fiscal intendants, and prefects and county magistrates for discussion. The proposal had still not been enacted half a year later when the Finance Planning Commission was abolished and all its functions, including the rural credit program, irrigation, and the persistent drafted service dilemma, were transferred to the Court of Agricultural Supervision under the leadership of Lü Hui-ch'ing.¹⁷⁵ Although Lü fervently agreed that conscription for prefectural and county service was the most urgent

¹⁷³ The directive is excerpted in SS, 177, p. 4299 and WHTK, 12, pp. 129-130, but the fullest version, from the original shih-huo chih, is anthologized in Li T'ao's commentary in HCP, 227, p.

5521. Li Tao's notes, pp. 5521-4, are the best source for recreating the history of the mien-i policy up to its universal enactment in 1071.10.

¹⁷⁴ The old method of granting these franchises to supply masters as compensation for their services had cost the state the market value of an important financial operation at a time of commercial expansion. By selling the franchise rights to the highest bidders, the state acquired a buoyant revenue source, worth 3 million strings of cash by 1076. Total returns by region to the 26,341 stations as of 1076, as part of the total revenue stream produced by the green sprouts and service-exemption measures as tabulated in the Chung-shu tui-pei are preserved in Yung-le ta-tien (repr. Peking, 1960), 7507, pp. 3360-2, and tabulated by Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen," pp.200-2; the entire revenue package is tabulated by Miyazawa, "HokuSo⁻ no zaisei to kahei keizai," pp. 327-32. For a description of the sealed-bid procedure used to auction off franchises in Shan-hsi in 1070.11 see HCP, 217, pp. 3274-5.

¹⁷⁵ HCP, 211, p. 5130; SHY, shih-huo 65, pp. 3b-4a.

problem facing rural society, he feared that the FPC proposal made too many enemies among the powerful who could evade service and the local functionaries who benefitted from its abuses. "Those who receive the most liberal benefits from the proposal are the poorest peasants, who as the simplest members of their villages are unable to represent their own interests; while those who are selected [to pay for service] include the baronial families of officials and engrossers who can easily get others to speak for them. Moreover if the policy is enacted uniformly then prefectural legal aides and county clerks will not be able to exploit the people and will therefore oppose the measure, making it very difficult to enact." Lü argued that it was because of this alliance between elites and local officials that the policy was so slow to take shape, writing that because of the powerful opposition to the measure "officials are not able to view the intent of the policy clearly, and are confused by the many different opinions of those who plot [against it] behind their walls. Therefore it will be difficult to bring the measure to fruition." As a result Lü counselled that the government should slowly experiment with the policy in one or two prefectures, and then if successful expand to the rest of the country.¹⁷⁶

Under Lü and (after Lü's leave for mourning) his successor Tseng Pu experimental programs were mounted in Shan-hsi, Szechwan, and Ho-pei.¹⁷⁷ But the most influential experiment was in K'ai-feng itself, where sometime in late 1070 the Commissioner-general for K'ai-feng (t'i-tien fu-chieh kung-shih), Chao Tzu-chi, submitted what was to become the prototypical service-exemption policy.¹⁷⁸ As approved and enacted by the Court of Agricultural Supervision in the first month of 1071, Chao's proposal followed the original FPC outline. First, in order to calibrate each household's fee fairly, all rural households were subdivided into fifteen subgrades and all urban households into ten grades, with the poorest rural grades (4 and 5) and urban grades (6 through 10) exempt from payment. Second, in order to neutralize the opposition of those propertied classes previously exempt from service, the households of ranked officials, households headed by women, families without taxable males, and temple households were only required to pay half the rate for their assessed grade.¹⁷⁹ Finally, the

¹⁷⁶ Taken from Lü Hui-ch'ing chia-chuan, quoted with notes on dating in HCP, 215, p. 5237 and 227, p. 5522.

¹⁷⁷ All three were reported in 1070.11: HCP, 217, pp. 5274-5, 5283-4. For Ssu-ma Kuang's opposition to the Shan-hsi experiment, see "Ch'i mien Yung-hsing-chun Lu mien-i-ch'ien cha-tzu," SMCC, 44, pp. 565-6. As all sources repeat, without explanation, after taking over in 1070.9 Tseng Pu earned Lü Hui-ch'ing's enmity by changing chü-i (service assistance) to mien-i (service exemption). What this may mean is that Tseng wanted to charge exemptees in full, which Lü -- and Wang -- thought would destroy political support for the measure. See, as an example, HCP, 215, p. 5237.

¹⁷⁸ The sources preserve only the response to Chao's proposal by Tseng Pu and his new co-leader of the Ssu-nung-ssu, Teng Wan. See Li T'ao's appended notes in HCP, 227, pp. 5522 and 5523, and SS, 177, p. 4300.

¹⁷⁹ Although Wang An-shih admitted the need to compromise with the privileged rich, it galled him. If the service-exemption fees for official families and urban dwellers were

fees collected from these two sources -- draft-liable and draft-exempt households -- would be used exclusively to hire volunteers from households of grade three and higher -- the middle and rich peasantry -- for the three most important government-service posts: supply masters, who had to put up property as collateral; county militiamen (literally "bowmen" kung-shou), who had to be tested in martial arts; and scribes (tien-li), who had to be tested in accounting. Terms of service were set at two to three years, and actual salaries were to vary with the labor market in each locale, and the difficulty and number of work-days required by each position.

Even the K'ai-feng prototype was experimental, and in the fifth month of 1071 local citizens and censors rallied against the plan. By this time, however, Wang An-shih had solidified his hold on government, and despite the temporary embarrassment of the "Tung-ming Affair" (discussed below) in 1071.10 the service-exemption policy was made the law of the land.¹⁸⁰

State trade (shih-i)

Taken as a whole, the green sprouts and hired service measures were intended to revive an agrarian economy that was endangered by rural credit markets controlled by the rich and a regressive service burden that favored the powerful. But the rural rich were not the only targets of the reformers' redistributionist zeal: Wang An-shih's "Request for a Finance Planning Commission" had launched the New Policies with an attack on "the wealthy merchants and great traders" who manipulated the market for commodities to their own advantage. Wang's memorial had spawned the "equalized tribute measure"

not reduced, he admitted to the emperor, "official households would block and undermine the measure, while urban households would congregate into mobs and beat the drums to intimidate the state councilors. Not even the emperor would be able to move their hearts." But Wang did hold the emperor partly to blame: "If your majesty were truly able to plan for benefit and harm, to distinguish true from false, and to clearly distinguish good and evil with rewards and punishments so that everyone would be awed, then [no one] would dare speak evil talk or rumor nor put forth wild and malicious plans, and powerful and cunning officials and commoners would naturally be stilled. If this were the case, then without doing any harm even more could be extracted from the engrossing magnates (chien-ping hao-ch'iang) in order to assist the poor:" See HCP, 223, p. 5427. Information on overall rates is spotty. In K'ai-feng County, 22,600 households were charged 12,900 strings of cash annually as of 1071, or about 570 cash per year: HCP, 227, p. 5522. Teng Wan estimated that the richest families would be charged 250 strings every decade -- the typical cycle for retranscription under the old system -- or 25 strings annually, while middle households would pay about 80 to 90 strings a decade. Teng claimed the fees were half of what families would have to pay as draftees: HCP, 227, pp. 5522-3. But, in 1082, the ever-normal granary intendant of Chiang-nan, Liu I, estimated that the richest families in Liang-che paid up to 800,000 cash (nominally 800 strings) annually in service exemption fees: eight times more than the draft had cost them. See HCP, 324, p. 3b.

¹⁸⁰ HCP, 227, p. 5521.

(chün-shu-fa), which charged Transport Intendant Hsüeh Hsiang to close the gap between local quotas and supply manipulated by engrossers, by replacing tribute quotas with government purchases of necessities and sales of surpluses on the market. Although the measure was never enacted, reformers continued to worry that by using their powers to manipulate prices, dominate access to markets, and control the supply of goods, the great urban merchants had created commercial monopolies that locked out small traders and harmed the consumers, and they sought a policy that would open up bottlenecked markets and free the circulation of goods.¹⁸¹

Their prototype was supplied by Wang Shao's state trade policy (shih-i-fa), an openly revenue-oriented measure that eyed merchant monopolies not as an evil to be eradicated but as an opportunity to be admired and appropriated. In early 1070, in the midst of his campaign to colonize the Tibetan tribal lands between the Ching-hai lake and Ch'in-feng Circuit, Wang Shao recommended that the thriving private Sino-Tibetan trade be appropriated and monopolized by the state, in order to subsidize the frontier campaign. Wang Shao complained that although hundreds of thousands of strings of cash worth of Tibetan goods were imported into China each year, "the profits created by these merchant travelers all revert back to the people [rather than the state]. I wish to establish a state trade agency in [Ch'in-feng Circuit] that will use government funds as capital [to buy domestic goods for trade to foreign merchants], in order to capture for the state the profits that now flow to merchants and traders." Wang anticipated returns of two-hundred thousand strings of cash on the monopolized trade, which he promised would be enough to finance the frontier campaign without further government funds.¹⁸²

As Wang Shao's chief patron in the capital, Wang An-shih strongly promoted the plan as an effective way of bolstering Tibetan loyalties, while at the same time providing crucial revenues for the troop build-up and campaigns in the northwest.¹⁸³ Shen-tsung was also much taken with the idea, which he envisioned as a lucrative source of cash, generating endless revenues through the magic of interest. As the emperor saw it,

The government uses its funds to buy up goods brought to market by Tibetan merchants, saving them the trouble of waiting around for a buyer. The officials then resell these goods to resident merchants on credit,[saving them the trouble of having to have

¹⁸¹ On the chün-shu-fa as progenitor of the state trade measure see Robert M. Hartwell, "The imperial treasuries: finance and power in Song China," Bulletin of Sung Yüan Studies, 20 (1988), pp. 18-89, esp. p. 69. For studies of the state trade measure see Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i-fa shu," and Miyazawa Tomoyuki, "So dai no toshi sho gyo to kokka -- shi-i-ho shinko," in Umehara Kaoru, ed., Chu goku kinsei no toshi to bunka (Kyoto, 1984), pp. 321-58.

¹⁸² SHY, shih-huo 37, p. 14a; HCP, 226, p. 5502.

¹⁸³ HCP, 214, p. 5205; 224, p. 5460; Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 73, pp. 464-5, "Yu Wang Tzu-ch'un (Shao) shu."

cash on hand. In addition to its markup on the sale] the government also collects interest on the credit transaction. And that is why the plan is advantageous.¹⁸⁴

Although Wang Shao proposed to commandeer the wholesalers' profits from private merchants, his plan was neither anti-engrosser in tone nor redistributionist in intent. But the basic outline of his policy meshed with the anti-engrosser zeal of the more radical reformers, and within two years of its enactment in 1070 in the northwest frontier a more redistributionist version of Wang Shao's measure was introduced in K'ai-feng. The new version was proposed in early 1072 by the self-described commoner, Wei Chi-tung, in response to a growing trade crisis in the capital caused by price fixing and monopolistic hoarding.¹⁸⁵ In the memorial that launched the state trade venture in K'ai-feng, Wei Chi-tung lambasted the "rich men and great families" (fu-jen ta-hsing) who took advantage of temporary imbalances in supply and demand to buy up and hoard the commodities brought into the city by traveling merchants at deflated prices, then waited until demand peaked before releasing them onto the market at inflated prices. Faced with these monopolistic tactics, provincial merchants had stopped transporting essential goods to the capital, depriving the city's consumers of essential goods and the state of necessary revenues. In keeping with reform rhetoric, Wei Chi-tung invoked the ancient adage that the true way to rule all under heaven required the ability "to confiscate from the rich in order to be able to give to the poor," an ability he lamented that officials had lost. As evidence, Wei noted that although the capital's Bureau of Monopoly Goods (ch'üeh-huo-wu) was overflowing with surplus cash and commodities, because of official incompetence none of this surplus was used to equalize prices.¹⁸⁶ In a recommendation that merged the credit and wholesalers' functions of Wang Shao's frontier trade bureau with the price-equalizing function of the ever-normal granaries, Wei Chi-tung called on the government to use surplus Bureau of Monopoly Goods funds to capitalize an "Ever-normal state trade agency" (ch'ang-p'ing shih-i-ssu) in the capital, managed by financial officials assisted by "worthy merchants" (liang-ku). Like its ever-normal granary prototype, the state trade agency would pay relatively generous prices to buy unmoved goods in a stagnant market, to the advantage of the traveling merchants; and charge relatively cheap prices to sell high-demand goods in a robust market, to the advantage of the consumer. In this way the state could equalize commodity prices, break the private monopolies held by the rich, stimulate commerce and protect the consumption needs of the people -- yet still obtain a modest profit to meet the financial needs of the state.

¹⁸⁴ SHY, shih-huo 37, p. 14b. This imperial endorsement is an early indication of the fascination with the power of usury as a fiscal tool that suffused New Policies economic planners.

¹⁸⁵ HCP, 231, p. 5622; SHY, shih-huo 37, pp. 14b-15a.

¹⁸⁶ The Bureau of Monopoly Goods was subordinate to the Court of the Imperial Treasury (t'ai-fu-ssu), and managed the resale or exchange of commodities collected through the commercial operations that financed the privy purse: SS, 165, pp. 3907-8.

Wang An-shih and his men in the Secretariat heartily endorsed the anti-engrosser thrust of Wei Chi-tsung's memorial, agreeing that "when merchants from around the empire bring goods to the capital, they are often exploited by the engrosser houses of the city. Everywhere livelihoods are lost, and guild shops and petty traders are being drained and exhausted by the need to eke out even a small profit." Arguing that in order to equalize prices and stimulate trade it was necessary to emulate the ancients by suppressing the engrossers, the reformers called for the establishment of a state trade bureau (shih-i-wu) that would make the state an active partner in commerce in the capital.¹⁸⁷

The Metropolitan State Trade Bureau was established in the third month of 1072 under the direction of Lü Chia-wen, a talented young financial expert who had earned Wang An-shih's patronage -- and the hand of his daughter -- by informing on the anti-reform views of his grand-uncle Lü Kung-pi (1007-1073).¹⁸⁸ Lü was assisted by three senior managers, although actual commercial transactions were entrusted to a consortium of brokers and guild members drawn from the K'ai-feng commercial community. These brokers were authorized to use the government's funds to purchase slow-moving commodities either for themselves, or for the state. In the first instance, the government used the power of credit to use guild merchants to purchase stagnating commodities: loans were made to guild merchants (who put up collateral and formed a five-man guarantee group or pao) who agreed to purchase depressed commodities from traveling merchants, at a price negotiated among the merchant, guild-member, and broker. The size of the loans was limited by the amount of collateral, offered at an interest rate of twenty percent per annum. Even at these terms not all goods could find a guild buyer, and in such cases the proposal authorized the state trade functionaries to purchase those commodities that might realistically be warehoused for later government sale at appropriate market prices.¹⁸⁹

Because it aimed at the intersection of K'ai-feng's commercial and political elite, including (said Wang) the empress's family, the state trade measure ignited controversy from the very start.¹⁹⁰ Within months of its enactment, complaints that state trade functionaries harassed merchants, encroached on the sale of essential commodities, and

¹⁸⁷ SHY, shih-huo 37, p. 14a.

¹⁸⁸ See Lü Chia-wen's biography in SS, 355, pp. 11187-90. For his act of "family treason" (chia-tsei), as the Lü family called it, the Sung-shih authors separated Chia-wen's biography from the rest of the Lü's, p. 11190.

¹⁸⁹ The operating principles are described in SHY, shih-huo 37, pp. 15a-b and HCP, 231, pp. 5622-3. Wang firmly believed in authorizing merchants to manage state trade affairs, telling the emperor in 1072.11 that "it is just because state trade matters are detailed and picayune that the bureau employs merchants to serve as its managers (kuo-tang-kuan). See HCP, 240, p. 5827.

¹⁹⁰ HCP, 251, p. 6125.

drove up the price of such staples as sesame, hair combs and cooking oil swamped the worried emperor. With his typical bravado, Wang blamed all the charges on engrossers, middlemen, and hangers-on who because they were disadvantaged by the new policy sought to reverse it through slander. To illustrate his point, Wang related the price-fixing practices of the tea-merchants guild:

In the tea-merchants guild (hang), there are more than ten engrosser firms (chien-ping chih chia). When traveling merchants bring tea to the capital, the engrossers first invite them to a feast where they arrange to buy their tea at a set price so low that it includes no mark-up; the engrossers then sell the tea to poorer members of the tea guild at double the price, out of which they take enough profit to reward [the traveling merchants as well]. Now that the state trade act is in effect, these engrosser firms have to buy tea at the same price as the poorer members of the guild, and so they slander the new law as inappropriate. I learned this from the deposition of a tea-guild member, but the other guilds are all like this as well.

Wang then asked rhetorically if the purpose of the new law was to equalize wealth, or to allow treacherous engrossers to profit from and encroach on the working poor as before. "If it is to equalize profits," Wang concluded, "then those engrossers who because of the new law might lose their livelihoods are not worth pitying."¹⁹¹

Shen-tsung could not easily ignore the complaints of either his relatives or of such reform leaders as Tseng Pu who eventually repudiated the state trade measure, and periodic doubts about the policy helped force Wang into his first retirement in 1074.4. But Shen-tsung's worries were always overcome by that fascination with the power of interest to generate revenues that he had expressed in 1070, and the emperor himself became one of the policy's biggest investors, providing massive subventions from the Inner Treasury to seed the State Trade Agency and help it grow.¹⁹²

Mutual security system (pao-chia)

Pao-chia, the fourth major reform, originated in response to heightened violence and banditry in the capital, and was not originally conceived of as an economic measure at all. The formal security apparatus of the Sung was clustered at the level of the prefecture, under the control of the military inspector (hsün-chien) with the assistance of local troops (ping-shih); the county, under the jurisdiction of the sheriff (wei) assisted by bowmen (kung-shou) conscripts; and the canton (hsiang), the largest subbureaucratic

¹⁹¹ HCP, 236, p. 5738.

¹⁹² Shen-tsung provided a subvention of one million strings to establish the Metropolitan State Trade Bureau in K'ai-feng; and another 2 million strings in late 1074 to help it expand its operations. See SHY, shih-huo 37, p. 15b; SHY, shih-huo 55, p. 32b; and HCP, 257, p. 6280; Hartwell, "The imperial treasuries," p. 69.

administrative unit, under the control of the conscripted elder (ch'i-chang) and his stalwart (chuang-ting) underlings. Below the canton level, villages formed into a variety of voluntary defense organizations to foster local security, including the "neighborhood mutual guarantee group" (lin-chü-hsiang-pao) and "local elder/stalwart township plan" (ti-fen ch'i-chuang lin-li).¹⁹³ Over time these voluntary associations tended to deteriorate, opening the way for local banditry and unrest. In 1070, the K'ai-feng Commissioner-general Chao Tzu-chi reported that when he had served as a civil aide in K'ai-feng residents had blamed local unrest on the collapse of the old, voluntary "pao-chia organization, in which rural families organized to keep watch on evil and treacherous activities, and to put a stop to banditry." At just the same time that he was formulating his service-exemption plan, Chao also called for a state-sponsored resuscitation of the mutual security system, "so that the wealthy can live in peace, without fear of thieves, by grouping together with the poor for survival, while the poor can live securely on the land by relying on cooperation with the wealthy for their livelihoods."¹⁹⁴

Building on Chao Tzu-chi's proposal, in the last month of 1070 Wang An-shih and Tseng Pu announced a complete set of pao-chia regulations for K'ai-feng and its subordinate counties. The regulations imposed a formal leadership and organizational structure over the local population: Every ten (later reduced to five) households were organized into a small guard, headed by a capable landowner as small-guard chief (pao-chang). At the next level of organization, every five small guard units formed a large guard (ta-pao), headed by the most capable and wealthiest landowner as Large Guard Chief (ta-pao chang). Finally, every five large guard units formed one Superior Guard (tu-pao), headed by two influential landowners as Superior Guard Leader (pao-cheng) and Assistant Leader (fu pao-cheng). The rank and file were drawn from the remaining families, irrespective of wealth: all master or guest (landlord or tenant) families with two mature males or more could be called upon to supply a guardsman (pao-ting), and all other families were regarded as "auxiliaries to the local guards" (chiu-chin fu-pao). Both guardsmen and auxiliaries were allowed to train with bows and arrows and any non-proscribed weapons. In contrast to the older system recalled by Chao Tzu-chi, participation in the the new mutual-security apparatus was compulsory. County officials in the capital supervised the formation of guard units, and in order to ensure compliance and population control each unit had to erect a tablet listing all its members, by household, individual, and designated guardsmen, and to report all families moving into or out of its territory. The responsibilities of the guard units were all connected with security and social control, and included nightly patrols, pursuit of thieves, and informing

¹⁹³ The clearest discussion of the pao-chia system during the Sung is still Sogabe Shizuo, "O Anseki no hoko ho," in his So dai keizajishi no kenkyu (Tokyo, 1974) pp. 1-63; which can be usefully supplemented by McKnight, Village and Bureaucracy, passim.

¹⁹⁴ HCP, 218, pp. 5298-9.

on bandits, murderers, arsonists, rapists, practitioners of unorthodox religious cults, and anyone who might harbor such evildoers.¹⁹⁵

As the authors of the Sung-shih emphasize, the initial pao-chia proposal was concerned entirely with banditry and social control; it had no links to larger military objectives, and was under the control of the Ssu-nung-ssu rather than the Bureau of Military Affairs.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, geographic expansion of the mutual security system was quite slow: it was over a year before the pao-chia regulations were extended to six prefectures surrounding the capital, in 1072.7; and they were only made universal in 1073.8.¹⁹⁷ By that time, however, Wang An-shih had begun to push the mutual security measure towards his ultimate goal -- replacing the regular mercenary army. From the very beginning Wang had envisioned pao-chia as the cornerstone of his plan to rejuvenate the Sung military, by replacing the mercenaries (mu-ping) on whom the dynasty had come to rely with a people's army (min-ping) drawn from the peasantry. Wang had only contempt for the hirelings who made up the backbone of the Sung army, whom he derided as shiftless and unruly riffraff "who cannot even see to their own safety." Peasants, on the other hand, Wang glorified as "simple, strong and single-minded men who know how to obey commands. From this perspective it is clear that in a crisis, there is nothing so useful as a people's army."¹⁹⁸

Beyond its strategic effectiveness, Wang was also convinced that militarizing the peasantry was the irreducible foundation of fiscal solvency. In contrast to his typical belief in expanding government spending as a way to stimulate the economy, Wang felt that military costs had to be cut sharply, by replacing hired mercenaries with the k of people's army that the militarists of the Five Dynasties had used so effectively: "If we are unable to reform our army so that it is more like their system [of peasant soldiers] then

¹⁹⁵ HCP, 218, pp. 5297-8. By 1075 five households, including tenants (k'e-hu), had become standard for the small guard, yielding household ratios of 5 (small guard): 25 (large guard): 250 (superior guard). See HCP, 267, p. 6553.

¹⁹⁶ SS, 192, p. 4768.

¹⁹⁷ HCP, 235, pp. 5710-1; 246, pp. 5999-6000. The spread of pao-chia often uced panic among the citizenry. In 1072.7 the Ssu-nung-ssu reported that people outside K'ai-feng's Feng-ch'iu County were shaking down potential pao-ting conscripts who hadn't yet registered, and Shen-tsung worried that the panic might spread to the newly targeted prefectures. Wang as usual dismissed the emperor's fears, blaming the problem on criminals who had already been driven to outlying counties by the pao-chia system; now that these counties too were being organized -- thus threatening their criminal livelihoods -- the hoodlums had taken to shaking down potential pao-ting conscripts. On the whole, Wang assured the emperor, pao-chia registration had gone quite smoothly, and out of hundreds of thousands of families registered in K'ai-feng's seventeen counties only twenty or so ividuals had come to the capital to complain.

¹⁹⁸ HCP, 236, p. 5743.

there will be no hope of enriching and strengthening the Middle Kingdom."¹⁹⁹ In Wang's view, pao-chia was the key to creating a peasant-based army that would cost only ten or twenty percent of the current mercenary system.²⁰⁰

As it happened, the principal economic benefit of the pao-chia system was an unintended consequence of militarization, for by tightening up the pao-chia organization in order to enhance its military readiness, the reformers created a command structure that could take over the very functions the state now paid for through the hired service policy. The consummation of this latent opportunity had to await the transformation of the service-exemption fees into an outright source of unencumbered funds, which is discussed in greater detail below. Here we will survey the two paths Wang took to militarize the mutual security apparatus: the system of detached service (shang-fan), which rotated pao-chia guardsmen into paramilitary service under the prefectural military inspector or county sheriff; and the system of military drill and review (chiao-yüeh), which trained pao-chia members for service as a form of national guard, or for absorption into the regular military.

In early 1071, even as he sought to calm Shen-tsung's worries about reports that some K'ai-feng residents had mutilated themselves to avoid pao-chia duty, Wang expressed his ultimate hope of rotating pao-chia troops into active service under the prefectural military inspectors (hsün-chien), and eventually mixing them into the national army.²⁰¹ A year later the first part of Wang's hope had crystallized in the detached service system, which was enacted in K'ai-feng in 1072.7. The detached-service system appended the local pao-chia structure to the prefectural military inspector: property-owning (chu-hu) guardsmen who volunteered to serve under the military inspectors were organized into squads of fifty guardsmen, and placed under a rotating command of two large guard chiefs (ta-pao-chang) and one superior or deputy superior guard leader (tu-fu pao-cheng).²⁰² Guardsman volunteers received monthly compensation in grain and

¹⁹⁹ WHTK, 153, p. 1334a.

²⁰⁰ WHTK, 153, p. 1335c; HCP shih-pu, 5, pp. 22b-3a.

²⁰¹ HCP, 221, pp. 12b-13a; 22a-3b; 5375. Likening laws to medicine -- "without some dizziness there cannot be a cure" -- Wang reluctantly agreed that there might be a few cases of self-mutilation, but he blamed them on rumors that pao-chia participants would be tattooed and impressed into militia service along the northern borders. His solution was to offer rewards to those who informed on rumor-mongers.

²⁰² For the regulations see HCP, 235, pp. 5697-99. After Wang first outlined the measure in 1072.5, the court apparently experimented with a more stringent set of controls that included tattooing of participants and month-long terms of active duty (HCP, 233, pp. 5650-1). By 1072.7 Wang argued for abolition of the tattoos and a reduction in the term of service in order to make the policy more attractive. Wang Tseng-yü discusses both the shang-fan and chiao-yüeh policies in his Sung-ch'ao ping-chih, pp. 122-6.

"sustenance cash (hsin-ts'ai ch'ien)," in return for which they served detached-service rotations of ten days duration. Off-duty guardsmen who participated in bandit sweeps were also eligible for fees, and received time off their next detached-service terms. While on detached service guardsmen received three sheng of rice and between 10 and 80 cash per diem. Payments for supervisors were far more generous: 3000 cash per term for the large guard chiefs, and 7000 cash for the superior guard leaders and assistant leaders.²⁰³ All volunteers for detached service were obliged to undergo military training, and those guardsmen who achieved the top three (of eight) levels of skill were eligible for grants of between three and fifteen piculs (tan) of relief grain in times of dearth. In addition to their training in the martial arts, while on duty the civilian guardsmen and their large guard and superior guard supervisors were all subject to a strict schedule of military discipline that put them directly under the command of the military inspectors, and mandated corporal punishments for any acts of insubordination.²⁰⁴

Financial considerations certainly entered into Wang's promotion of the detached service plan. In preliminary discussions of the measure, Wang estimated that by replacing 6,000 local troops permanently attached to the military inspectors in the K'ai-feng region with 100,000 guardsmen (pao-ting) on ten-day terms of detached service, the court could save 100,000 strings of cash annually.²⁰⁵ Wang even hoped to use pao-chia to cut the costs of the labor-service system, by assigning pao-chia units to the county sheriff to replace the bowmen, only recently put on salary by the service-exemption reforms.²⁰⁶ But Wang also hoped that the combination of cash incentives, grain, tax exemptions, and relief-grain credits built into the system would heighten the military readiness of the entire population, by driving the populace to "compete towards greater levels of military skill, so that they will not even have to go on detached service to learn satisfactorily. . . . In a few years time not only will the pao-chia guardsmen exceed the skills of righteous brave militia, they will even surpass the regular troops. . . who are not driven in their hearts like the guardsmen." Tseng Pu added that because the tax and cash

²⁰³ Compensation for supervisors is stated explicitly in HCP, 235, p. 5699. Wang estimated that guardsmen would be paid 80 cash a day for a ten-day rotation; but in 1084, Fan Ch'ün-ts'ui reported that under the "old regulations" -- presumably those of 1072 -- guardsmen received only 10 cash per day. See HCP, 233, p. 5651 and HCP, 343, p. 2a-b.

²⁰⁴ HCP, 237, pp. 5769-70. As the system spread terms of detached service came to vary by place and season, with ten days to half a month standard. See Wang Tseng-yu, Sung-ch'ao ping-chih, p.123.

²⁰⁵ HCP, 233, p. 5651. The annual compensation bill for the six thousand military inspectorate troops (hsün-chien ping-chi) came to 180,000 strings. If an apparent textual corruption is disregarded, Wang's figures work out to a cost of 30 strings per soldier per year (or 82.19 cash per diem), as opposed to 800 cash per rotation (or 80 cash per diem) for each guardsman. It should be noted that as of 1076, K'ai-feng had only 73,718 men on active pao-chia duty: SHY, ping 2, pp. 12b-15a

²⁰⁶ HCP, 235, p. 5697.

incentives would use commoners to use their leisure time to practice martial arts, "without exhortation everyone will compete to improve their skills, and soon no one, including the bandit gangs in the capital, will be able to withstand [the guardsmen on detached service]."²⁰⁷

Wang and Tseng Pu had enormous confidence in the new system, for they immediately ordered military inspectors to replace all but a handful of the hsiang-chün prefectural troops necessary for corvee duty with pao-chia men. Four months later, 1072.11, the system was extended to county sheriffs as well.²⁰⁸ By 1073.8 pao-chia guardsmen had replaced one-third of the assorted troops under the control of the military inspectors in K'ai-feng, and were deployed as supplements to the bowmen assigned to the county sheriffs. Though somewhat slower to take root in the north, where the emphasis was on military drill rather than bandit control, by mid-1075 the detached service system was enacted throughout the empire.²⁰⁹

The detached-service system represented the court's attempt to pare administrative costs by shaping pao-chia into the primary mechanism for social control at the county and prefectural levels. In K'ai-feng and the five circuits of the north, the reformers also pushed for outright militarization of the pao-chia system, through the institution of a military "drill and review" (chiao-yüeh) program. Like detached service, when it was first tried out in K'ai-feng in 1071.9 the new program was described as purely voluntary, driven by an incentive system. During the slack season guardsmen (pao-ting) could undergo testing in archery, horsemanship, and foot-soldiery, with rewards that included imperial review and an official post for the most accomplished, and 2000 cash and one month's corvee exemption for the second rank. The government made a special effort to bring superior guard leaders and assistant leaders -- by law the wealthiest and most able members of their communities -- into the procedure: even leaders with no particular military skills could be "benevolenced" (en-shih) into the highest grade if their guardsmen showed particular zeal in training, or the level of bandit activity in their guard unit was low.²¹⁰ By 1073.8 drill and review had become standard in the five northern circuits of Ho-pei East and West, Ho-tung, and the two sub-circuits of Shan-hsi as well, making it a fixture of rural life at the capital and throughout the entire region of north China that bordered the Liao and the Tanguts.²¹¹

Two years later, in 1075, the pace of militarization was heightened when control over pao-chia was transferred from the Court of Agricultural Supervision to the Bureau

²⁰⁷ HCP, 235, p. 5698.

²⁰⁸ HCP, 237, p. 5669.

²⁰⁹ HCP, 246, pp. 5999-6000; SHY, ping 2, p. 10a.

²¹⁰ HCP, 226, p. 5516. See also SS, 192, p. 4768.

²¹¹ HCP, 246, pp. 5999-6000.

of Military Affairs.²¹² That same year the size of pao-chia units in K'ai-feng and North China was halved to tighten the density of control, guest households with two adult males were made full rather than auxiliary members of a regular unit, and pao-chia drill and review procedures were standardized and merged with those of the i-yung (righteous brave) militia.²¹³ Then in mid 1076 the court sought to transform the pao-chia organization into tight tactical fighting units in the event of war, by superimposing over the large guard units a new "squad structure" (tui-fa), developed only two years earlier for troops on the Sino-Tangut border.²¹⁴ But no complex tactical reorganization could be undertaken without intensifying the drill and review procedures for guardsmen and their leaders, and in 1079.11 the drill program was put under higher order supervision with the designation of Intendants for Military Drill and Review (t'i-chü chiao-yueh-shih) for K'ai-feng and for each of the five circuits of north China.²¹⁵ The new drill regimen brought the pao-chia organization into direct contact with the regular military: drill chiefs (chiao-t'ou) drawn from the imperial troops and military servitors (shih-ch'en) were assigned to train the large guard chiefs (ta-pao-chang) in archery, crossbows, and horsemanship, who in turn divided their local pao-chia guardsman into drill "teams" (t'uan). This "team drill measure" (t'uan chiao-fa) not only buttressed the power of the already wealthy and influential men who stood at the top of the pao-chia hierarchy, but also made participation in military drill and review virtually compulsory for pao-chia men in K'ai-feng and north China.²¹⁶

²¹² SS, 192, p. 4770.

²¹³ HCP, 267, p. 6553; SHY, ping 2, p. 10a. I-yung militia-men, conscripted from among the peasantry of Ho-pei, Ho-tung, and Shan-hsi, were tattooed on the hand and obliged to undergo military drill in the off-season. In 1081 the i-yung militia were absorbed into the pao-chia system: WHTK, 153, p. 1335; SHY, ping 2, pp. 17a-23b. For the impact of drill and review reforms on the provincial armies see Koiwai Hiromitsu, Sôdai heiseishi no kenkyû (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 171-201.

²¹⁴ SHY, ping 2, p. 11a-b; HCP, 275, p. 6723. See Sogabe, "O⁻ Anseki no hoko⁻ ho⁻," p.14; on the new "squad structure" see Wang Tseng-yü, Sung-ch'ao ping-chih, p.108.

²¹⁵ HCP, 301, pp. 5a-6a; SS, 192, p. 5770.

²¹⁶ SS, 192, pp. 4770-1; Sogabe, p.23. In 1084 Fan Ch'un-jen reported that in Ho-chung-fu, in eastern Shan-hsi (Yung-hsing-chun Circuit), not only were drills and inspection conducted during the summer agricultural season, but that "no one not old or weak was allowed to remain at home." Fan added that "these days most relatively healthy peasants must serve as guardsmen and drill for five days. When the travel time [to the drill site] is included, it can be seen how this seriously interferes with the harvest." See HCP, 345, pp. 15b-16b. Fan exaggerates somewhat: as of 1083, Yung-hsing-chun Circuit had 155,536 men in the pao-chia system, of whom 103,865 were guardsmen. This equals roughly one pao-chia member for every 5.4 households (at a total population of 836,759 households) -- close to the statutory number -- and one guardsman for every eight households. See HCP, 337, pp. 6a-9a.

INSERT TABLE __, *PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN ACTIVE PAO-CHIA SERVICE, 1076*

How deeply did the pao-chia system reach into local Chinese society? According to the statistical portrait of the pao-chia system preserved in the Essential Regulations of the Sung (Sung hui-yao), as of 1076 there were 6.9 million men on the active pao-chia rosters. If we assume that no family supplied more than one pao-chia member, then almost half (46 percent) of the empire's 15 million households supplied an active pao-chia member overall. Of course there was great regional variation in pao-chia participation, as shown in the accompanying **Table**__. Excluding Kuang-nan West, it may appear as though the capital of K'ai-feng and the five circuits of north China were the least affected by the pao-chia system, which drew only 25.7 to 31.3 percent of the northern population. But more significant than total membership is the percentage of members involved in formal drill and review: virtually all pao-chia conscripts in north China and the capital were subject to military drill. Elsewhere the total numbers of households in pao-chia were much higher: 70 percent of the populations of Ching-hsi and Huai-nan were organized in pao-chia, probably reflecting the high incidence of banditry south and west of the capital; and in the rest of China some 45 percent of the population was enfolded into the pao-chia system. But outside of K'ai-feng and north China none of the population was put under drill and review, suggesting that whereas the goal in the north was tilted towards military preparedness, in the south it was social control. Moreover, as the reformers became ever more obsessed with generating new revenues, the huge organizational capacity of the pao-chia system could be used to help squeeze out financial surpluses as well, as we will see.

From economic redistribution to revenue extraction

Rural credit

In a policy-making environment dominated by the quest for funds to finance new state initiatives and the emperor's northern campaigns, the redistributionist rationale that justified the new economic policies was soon sacrificed to the need for revenues. The green sprouts policy was the first measure to succumb to the hunger for revenues, despite the government's explicit disavowal of a fiscal interest in the loan fund. In the eyes of critics of the policy, fiscalization was signalled by the imposition of interest charges on the green sprouts loans. No provisions were made for interest charges in the original directive of 1069.9, but within a few months rates of twenty to thirty percent annually were imposed in order to finance the plan.²¹⁷ Critics such as Han Ch'i, Ou-yang Hsiu, and Ssu-ma Kuang denounced the unseemliness of government usury, and predicted that the collection of interest fees would soon supercede rural credit relief as the primary operations goal of the farming loan policy. Wang countered that although charging interest on the government loans was by no means ideal, the practice, which was sanctioned by the Chou-li, was the only way to keep the loan fund solvent.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 19a; CPPM, 68, pp. 2164-69.

²¹⁸ See HCP shih-pu, 7, pp. 24a-29b, for the debate on interest rates, drawn primarily from Han Ch'i's Chia-chuan. For Wang's argument see "Ta Tseng Kung-li shu," Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi, 73, p. 464.

But Wang's critics were right that the imposition of interest charges opened the door to government profit-seeking, for soon maximizing the revenue potential of the loan fund became the first priority of the green sprouts measure. In evaluating the performance of officials connected with the green sprouts measure, from the Ever-normal Granary Intendants down to the local officials who actually transacted the loans, much greater emphasis was placed on meeting the quotas for loan distribution and collection than on effective administration of the disaster-relief operation. As Ou-yang Hsiu pointed out in mid-1070, despite government pronouncements against forced loans (i-p'ei), officials up and down the chain of command knew that they would be penalized if funds went undistributed or loans uncollected.²¹⁹

This pressure to maximize financial returns to the loan fund inevitably prompted officials to make as many loans as possible, which led to a predictable array of abuses, including (in the eyes of opponents) the seduction of poor peasants into an escalating cycle of debt and extravagance.²²⁰ But it was just these poor peasants who were least able to repay their loans, making both them and their guarantors subject to confiscation first of their collateral, and then of their immovable property. These properties could be sold by the state, and as of 1071 the returns from these debt sales were funnelled back into the rural loan fund, where it could generate more revenues.²²¹ Indeed it was this seizure and sale of property from the very segment of the population that the loan policy was intended to aid that underscored the conflict between the social and fiscal objectives of the green sprouts measure. In order to balance these competing aims the government attempted to create a consistent policy on payment deferrals (i-ko), but through the very end of the New Policies, Ever-normal Granary officials were caught between the court's reluctance to press poor peasants too hard and its insistence that repayments not fall below quota.²²²

Ultimately the most effective way to maximize green sprouts revenues without undermining the poor peasantry was to disregard the targeted beneficiaries of the measure, and make loans to anyone who could be counted on to repay them. Consequently, in early 1070 the Finance Planning Commission pegged loan limits to the household grading system, and extended eligibility to virtually all residential (as opposed to

²¹⁹ See, for example, HCP, 211, p. 5133.

²²⁰ Su Shih's retrospective denunciation of the green sprouts loans is typical of the conservative efforts to extol the natural, demonetized economy: "Peasant households balance expenditures against income, and economize in clothing and food, so that even if they are poor they still meet their basic needs. But when the peasants get more money than they need their expenses naturally increase, and there is nothing they will not do to get more money still." See HCP, 384, p. 10b.

²²¹ HCP, 228, p. 5547. See also HCP, 279, p. 6845; HCP, 294, pp. 8b-9a.

²²² SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 16b. For further discussion see Smith, "State power and economic activism."

itinerant, fou-lang) families. The new order entitled grade five and guest households to 1500 cash; grade four to 3000 cash; grade three to 6000 cash; grade two to 10,000 cash; and the highest grade to 15,000 cash. The order then added that "if there are remaining funds, county officials are authorized to assess the situation and offer additional loans to households of grade three and above; if there are still surpluses, then interested households from the urban wards and suburbs with property and businesses to offer as collateral will be allowed to form into five-family guarantee groups and obtain loans under the green sprouts statutes."²²³

This extension of loans to anyone who could pay immediately inflamed opponents of the green sprouts measure. In his plea of 1070.2 to abolish the policy, Ssu-ma Kuang predicted that the new ruling would encourage administrators to force loans on the rich:

Now county officials are issued interest-funds to lend to the people in spring and fall. None of the wealthy people want the loans, but the poor people do. Because administrators want to distribute loans on a wide scale in order to accumulate official merit, they just force loans on the people according to their household grade, without inquiring into their actual circumstances. The wealthy are assigned relatively large loans, the poor somewhat smaller. Large loans go up to fifteen strings, small ones not less than 1000 cash. Prefectural and county officials and clerks fear getting stuck with the responsibility of absconders and defaulters, so they order the poor and rich to array themselves together in pao-chia guarantee groups. The wealthy are made the chiefs (k'uei-shou), the poor obtain money, and in no time at all the money is gone. In the future if the millet or wheat harvests are inadequate, the people will not even be able to pay their twice yearly tax, let alone the interest payments. Since they cannot repay, the fears of the clerks will be spread to all four quarters and, inescapably, the wealthy will have to repay the accumulated debts of the many households.²²⁴

At the same time, Han Ch'i embarrassed the reformers by insisting that by making loans available to everyone, the court was providing public monies to the very same group -- the engrossers -- that the green sprouts measure was intended to suppress:

²²³ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 19a.

²²⁴ "Ch'i pa t'iao-li-ssu ch'ang-p'ing-shih shu," SMWC, 44, p. 560. Ssu-ma then goes on to outline a scenario for disaster in which the poor will be exhausted, the rich made poor, and the state forced to forgo its revenues through widespread payment deferrals. "And once the wealthy are completely exhausted, if the nation (kuo-chia) should have the misfortune of a border emergency, and have to raise many troops, then from whom will the monies for grain, cloth, and military provisions be raised?"

It is the rural households of grade three and above and the propertied urban and suburban households that have heretofore been the 'engrossing families'. Now they are all given loans and charged 1300 cash for every 1000. The government is simply chasing after interest payments. This measure absolutely contradicts the stated intent of the policy to suppress engrossers and aid those in need.²²⁵

Wang An-shih tried to downplay the ideological contradiction, countering that even wealthy families could encounter hard times and be forced into ruin by private lenders. "How can they all be 'engrosser families'?", Wang asked, insisting that lending them surplus funds was exactly what was meant by repressing engrossers.²²⁶ But Han Ch'i utterly rejected Wang's response, contending that "everyone under heaven" knows that these wealthy rural, urban, and suburban families are engrossers. "The only reason the Finance Planning Commission denies that they are engrossing households is because they want to push even more green sprouts funds on them in order generate still more interest."²²⁷

The government's effort to wring as much money as possible out of the rural credit measure also threatened to undermine a basic function of the ever-normal granary system, disaster relief. Critics drew the emperor's attention to granary officials who withheld relief grain from the hungry poor in order to build up the size of the loan fund. In 1074, Shen-tsung complained that although loan revenues were substantial, over seventy percent of the total ever-normal granary reserves in cash and grain had been distributed as loans, at a time when widespread drought and famine made adequate relief grain essential. From this point on, the granaries were ordered to hold half their resources in reserve.²²⁸

In the end, however, all Shen-tsung's doubts about the rural credit program were overwhelmed by its revenue potential. For example, when in 1074 Shen-tsung worried that local loan officials might be violating the laws, Wang An-shih recommended creating five hundred new county level recorder's posts to keep the loan accounts. Any anxiety Shen-tsung had about the additional expense evaporated when Wang An-shih assured him that by spending 100,000 strings of cash to hire five hundred new recorders, the court could protect its annual profits of three million strings of cash from the loans.²²⁹ From 1071 to 1085 the green sprouts loan fund was paired with the the service

²²⁵ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 19b.

²²⁶ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 23a.

²²⁷ SHY, shih-huo 4, p. 27b; HCP shih-pu, 7, pp. 26a-7b.

²²⁸ HCP, 256, p. 6263; HCP, 272, pp. 6663-4.

²²⁹ HCP, 250, p. 6095.

exemption fees as the chief source of money for reform projects, including flood and famine relief, irrigation works, and border provisioning and defense; and in 1082, two years after Shen-tsung built the Yüan-feng Treasury to hold the growing New Policies bounty, eight million strings in surplus farming-loan funds from around the country were deposited in its vaults.²³⁰ Overall, the farming-loan system operated under a minimum quota of 13.9 million strings collected on loans of 11 million strings, for a net-profit quota of 26.5 percent. Individual officials were in turn judged for promotion or demotion primarily (though not exclusively) on the basis of their success in meeting local loan targets, which were not abolished until 1086.²³¹ Although social-welfare ideals could not be ignored in an agency ostensibly dedicated to agrarian relief, it is clear that for the duration of the New Policies making money became the chief objective of the farming loans measure, while economic welfare was delegated to a secondary role.

Hired service and pao-chia

Because of philosophical antipathy to state usury, the green sprouts measure encountered immediate and strident opposition from officials at court and in the field, but was welcomed by a populace hungry for new sources of cash. The hired-service measure met less strident opposition from acting officials, many of whom supported its basic goals; instead, it provoked an immediate reaction from politically aware and well-connected sectors of the public, who saw the service-exemption fees as nothing more than a new and obnoxious tax. The first outpouring of discontent took place in Liang-che Circuit in the fourth month of 1071, when local residents learned that two circuit administrators had been recommended for promotion for proposing an exemption-fee quota that was twice what the services would actually cost. Their outrage was seized on by vice censor-in-chief Yang Hui as evidence that revenue-gathering (chü-lien, or "fiscalism") had already begun to supplant tax equitability as the main goal of the measure. Shen-tsung initially added the imperial voice to Yang Hui's concerns, but his anxiety gave way to anger when Wang An-shih gave the incident a more insidious spin: for him, the episode just proved that even though they had not yet been greatly harmed by the measure, the "engrossers" were powerful enough to manipulate the opinions of the scholarly elite (shih-ta-fu), and to even confuse the emperor with their babble.²³²

²³⁰ HCP, 330, pp. 12a-b. The Ch'ang-pien contains extensive material on farming-loan subventions to other agencies.

²³¹ HCP, 226, p. 5506; for the memorial by Ssu-ma Kuang that heralded the suspension of the green sprouts measure see HCP, 368, pp. 23b-6a.

²³² HCP, 223, pp. 5421, 5433-4. Liang-che residents reacted against a reform initiative more publicly in early 1073, when two hundred residents of Su-chou confronted the water-works intendant Chia Tan, leading to his dismissal. See Lin Hsi's report in HCP, 240, pp. 5824-5, excerpted and analysed in Mihelich, "Polders and the politics of land reclamation," pp. 96-101.

A second incident of public protest against the hired-service measure was harder for Wang An-shih to gloss over. In the fifth month of 1071, eleven-hundred residents of K'ai-feng's Tung-ming County marched on the prefectural yamen to complain that their household grades had been arbitrarily raised in order to increase their service-assistance fees. Whipped into a fury by the yamen's refusal to hear their case, the crowd converged on Wang An-shih's residence to vent their anger. Though Wang succeeded in driving them away he was emotionally shaken by the incident, which he tried to portray as a provocation incited by the Tung-ming County magistrate, Ku Fan. Ku Fan was ultimately impeached, but not before censors Yang Hui and Liu Chih denounced the transformation of the service exemption fees into a new layer of taxes on the entire population, including the lowest classes explicitly excluded by the original order. For Liu Chih in particular, the Tung-ming affair illustrated the inevitable consequence of "activist statecraft" (ta yu-wei chih pi): that "the petty men who actually administer the policies will devote themselves to raising revenues in order to earn rewards, thereby transforming the best-intentioned of measures into outright fiscalism."²³³

Although the attack by Yang Hui and Liu Chih embarrassed the reformers into reiterating the prohibition against manipulation of the household registration process, Wang and Tseng Pu launched a counterattack that drove Yang and Liu to lesser posts outside the capital.²³⁴ Their ouster marked the end of pointed censorial opposition to the reforms, and enabled Wang to extend the hired service measure to the entire nation in the tenth month of 1071.²³⁵ Between 1071 and Wang's resignation in 1076, the hired service policy was transformed from a progressive attempt to professionalize county and prefectural-level service and equalize the financial burden it imposed on middle and upper-grade households, to a regressive cluster of fees and surcharges imposed on the entire population in order to swell revenues.

The first great departure from the original progressive, egalitarian rhetoric of the hired service policy came with the extension of service-exemption fees to the poorest property-owning peasant, those ranked grades four and five. Initially fees were collected only from those households that were directly liable for government service -- the service-exemption fee (mien-i ch'ien) -- or those households that possessed adequate resources but were exempt from service because of privilege -- the service-assistance fee (chu-i-ch'ien) charged to officials, widows, and urban dwellers. Although rural households of grades four and five were still liable for conscription as local patrolmen, or

²³³ HCP, 224, pp. 5442-43. See also 223, pp. 5425-30; 224, pp. 5439-40, 5444-48; 225, pp. 5479-88.

²³⁴ As a parting shot, Liu denounced Wang and his followers for "summoning to government every proponent of 'finance,' including merchants, tradesmen, and butchers, and employing every possible way of making money, including selling calendars on the streets." See HCP, 225, p. 5484. For Tseng Pu's detailed rebuttal of the two censors' charges, see HCP, 225, pp. 5469-74, also in SHY, shih-huo 65, pp. 8b-11a.

²³⁵ HCP, 227, p. 5521.

"stalwarts" (chuang-ting), by the original statutes of the hired-service policy they were exempt from paying any fees.²³⁶ By the time the measure was universally enacted, however, the imposition of service exemption fees of between 200 and 1000 cash on grade four and five households had become routine.²³⁷ In 1072.8 Shen-tsung asked that grade-five families be exempted, but demurred when Wang An-shih pointed out the fiscal utility of those fees:

Although families in grade five do not pay very much, in Liang-che Circuit we have collected 40,000 strings of cash despite exempting the lower half of the grade five category. If there are poor harvests in Liang-che, this money might be enough to assist the hard-working peasants by hiring them for water-control projects or to replace ponds and drainage ditches. As long as your majesty does not use this money frivolously, then it is not cruel to collect it.²³⁸

Although collecting fees from poor households to fund local relief programs may not have been cruel, it certainly did not meet the original goals of the service-exemption measure. And observers inside and outside the reform administration agreed that however insignificant, the new fees placed an unwarranted burden on the poorest households. The size of the cash fee varied from place to place, but even the smallest sum could be a burden. In Liang-che Circuit as of 1073, the roughly one million grade-five households (out of a total population of 1.8 million households) paid an average of 50 to 60 cash in service fees per family, for services they themselves were not liable to perform.²³⁹ Although 50 cash might seem insignificant, Chang Fang-p'ing asserted that in Honan's Ying-t'ien-fu (Ching-tung W.) fifty cash might be all the money a peasant family saw in a year.²⁴⁰ And in Kuang-nan West, the Ever-normal Granary Intendant Liu I reported in 1082, even a service-exemption fee of five or eight cash could be ruinous, since it forced timid and isolated peasants to come up with cash and then, at the height of the growing season, travel to the yamen to pay.²⁴¹ Finally, though in less rustic places the yamen officials came to the peasants, as Su Shih points out for the poor peasants of Hangchow, this was not necessarily any cheaper:

²³⁶ SHY, shih-huo 65, pp. 4b-5a; on extension of fees to lower households see Sudo Yoshiyuki, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen cho⁻ shu⁻ no sho mondai," pp. 241-56.

²³⁷ HCP, 227, pp. 5526-7.

²³⁸ HCP, 237, p. 5779.

²³⁹ HCP, 248, p. 6055.

²⁴⁰ HCP, 277, p. 6789.

²⁴¹ HCP, 324, p. 3a.

[Prior to the service-exemption measure] families of grade 4 and below were not liable for government service at the county and prefectural level, but merely served as stalwart men. . . . Once the measure was established, however, they all had to pay service fees. Although the fees were not great, even the poorest people had to come up with 300 to 500 cash for no reason. Before they were even ready the clerks and soldiers would be at their doors, and it would take 100 cash just to avert disaster; even before they had paid the government, the cost was heavy.²⁴²

Even as service-exemption fees were being extended to all property owners, a second assault on the progressivity of the hired service measure was in the offing: the introduction of new surcharges. When service-exemption quotas were first being estimated for the entire country, in late 1071, officials were ordered to add a percentage to the anticipated annual wage bill for each locale, to serve as an emergency fund to offset arrearages caused by famine or drought. This additional charge, called the "surplus emergency fee" (k'uan-sheng ch'ien), was calculated as an increase in the total fee quota assessed each locale, which was then distributed among all the households based on their grade and status as rural or urban.²⁴³ Officials were initially instructed to allow ten percent for the emergency fund, but the first set of quotas (in turn the basis for individual assessments) was considerably higher: out of a total quota of 12,343,670 strings of cash, 9,258,585 strings were earmarked for distribution, and 3,085,022 designated as surplus. By this reckoning, the "surplus" emergency fund constituted 33.3 percent of the wage bill, or 24.9 percent of the total collection quota. Moreover, in many circuits the percentage of total collections set aside as "surplus" -- to take the second approach -- was considerably higher: Ching-tung East and West Circuits stood at 39.1 and 38.3 percent respectively, and Ho-tung and Ching-hu South Circuits were at 42.1 percent and 44.8 percent.²⁴⁴

²⁴² HCP, 435, p. 6a, cited in Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen," p. 244.

²⁴³ SHY, shih-huo 65, p. 12b; SS, 177, p. 4300; for discussion see Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen," pp. 203-22.

²⁴⁴ The figures come from the Chung-shu tui-pei enumeration of returns to the green sprouts, service exemption, and winery and ferry installation funds for 1076, as preserved in Yung-lo ta-tien entry for ts'ang (granaries), 7507, pp. 3357-66. For the service exemption funds, the Chung-shu tui-pei first gives each circuit's quota for receipts, expenditures, and surplus emergency fees (k'uan-sheng ch'ien). Sudo tabulates the surplus emergency fee figures by circuit in "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen," pp. 216-7. Following the quotas, the actual returns for 1076 are given, broken down into four categories of income flow: receipts (shou), expenditures (chih), current balance (hsien-tsai), and "earmarked funds" (ying-tsai), which Sudo interprets as funds earmarked but not yet spent, a measure of the progressive transfer of control over tax revenues from the local and regional to the central government; see pp. 221-2. The figures are aggregated by circuit, and each category is further broken down by exchange medium. Sudo tabulates the circuit figures on pp. 218-19; Miyazawa Tomoyuki tabulates the entire set

In 1074 service exemption fees were raised further with the addition of a new surtax, the t'ou-tzu head surtax of 5 cash per 1000 levied on all mien-i payments. This new fee was meant to pay for those local services, such as maintenance of official buildings, portage, and the provision of implements, that had formerly been the responsibility of draftees.²⁴⁵ In practice, however, it simply joined the "surplus emergency fee" to help swell the total mien-i fund well beyond what might be needed for the service wage bill under any circumstances. For example, according to the perceptive Szechwanese reform opponent Lü T'ao, in 1076 the most prosperous region of his province, Chengtu-fu Circuit, spent only 66 percent of its service exemption fund on salaries.²⁴⁶ At the same time the country as a whole spent only 60.7 percent of its hired service funds on wages, or 6,487,688 out of 10,414,553 strings.²⁴⁷

What became of the remaining forty percent? The fiscal success of the green sprouts measure suggested one use to cash-hungry administrators. In 1072.3, just a few months after universal promulgation of the service-exemption policy, K'ai-feng administrators were ordered to use their surplus-fee fund to make interest-bearing loans to the public. Five months later, beguiled by the service-exemption surplus already building up in northern Szechwan, Wang An-shih declared that the interest collected on all unused service-exemption funds could be diverted to finance clerical salaries, and thereby promote his program to professionalize the clerical service and merge clerical and official streams.²⁴⁸ By 1075 the interest generated by hired service funds had joined the income from wineries, ferry crossings, and other fees as a source for the roughly 1.1 million strings needed annually for the salaries of clerks in the capital (413,400 strings) and in circuit and prefectural offices (689,800 strings).²⁴⁹

of accounts by circuit and exchange media in "HokuSo^o no zaisei to kahei keizai," pp. 327-32.

²⁴⁵ HCP, 251, p. 6113. These services were collectively termed yüan-jung.

²⁴⁶ That is, 406,024 strings out of 615,673 strings. See Lü T'ao, "Tsou wei mien-i-ch'ien ch'i-chuang er-fen chün-peí chih-yung chuang," Ching-te chi (Wu-ying tien ed., repr. n.p., 1899) 1, pp. 2a-3b. Lü's memorial is analysed in Sudo, "O^o Anseki no boyakusen," pp. 214-15.

²⁴⁷ Chung-shu tui-peí, in Yung-lo ta-tien 7507, p. 3357. For tabulations of the circuit figures see Sudo, "O^o Anseki no boyakusen," pp. 218-19, and Miyazawa Tomoyuki, "HokuSo^o no zaisei to kahei keizai," p. 329.

²⁴⁸ HCP, 231, p. 5614; 237, pp. 5764-65.

²⁴⁹ HCP, 248, p. 6052, cited in Sudo, "O^o Anseki no boyakusen," p. 208; SS, 177, p. 4306.

Not surprisingly, the revenue potential of the service exemption accounts used officials to maximize financial surpluses by drawing funds away from their designated purpose -- hiring service personnel. Between 1070 and 1076 mien-i administrators experimented with a variety of ways to spend as little of their service funds as possible. One such experiment, the "land in return for service" policy (kei-t'ien mu-jen), was enacted by Lü Hui-ch'ing in mid-1074, while he was standing in for Wang An-shih. The new plan (devised by Lü's brother Wei-ch'ing) was designed to preserve the liquidity of the service-exemption fund by continuing to collect the fees without actually using them to pay service agents; in their place, the government would pay agents with tenancies on official lands. Although the government actually tried the policy in a few places it turned out to be too costly, and Wang An-shih peremptorily abolished it when he returned to office in 1075.2, thereby exacerbating the tension between him and his closest lieutenant.²⁵⁰

Other strategems were more successful in accumulating service exemption surpluses. Most importantly, by either reducing the number of government service positions needed, or transferring the responsibilities to civil service and military personnel, financial officials reduced the number of functionaries paid out of hired service funds even as they increased the total amount of money collected. Reform of the drafted service system was always intended to reenforce market mobilization with a reduction in the number of functionaries, especially supply masters, that would be needed. The original reductions were aimed more at administrative efficiency than revenue production, and they were quite successful. In 1070.11, the Fiscal Intendant of Tzu-chou Circuit, in central Szechwan, was commended by Wang An-shih and the emperor for consolidating tribute shipments out of his circuit by 136 convoys, for a savings of 283 supply master posts and 501 service personnel (kung-jen).²⁵¹ A month later Han Wei, the prefect of K'ai-feng and no supporter of the reforms despite being Han Chiang's brother, was also praised for abolishing 835 rural supply master posts (hsiang-hu ya-ch'ien) in the capital prefecture.²⁵² Even after unnecessary supply master positions were squeezed out of the system, further savings were made by replacing the proto-professional supply-masters -- the generic t'ou-ming ya-ch'ien -- with civil and military officials. In early 1072, the concurrent Judicial and Ever-normal Granary Intendant of Chiang-nan, Chin Chün-ch'ing, realized substantial savings on the shipment of spice and silks from Chiang-nan to the capital by hiring fifty "officials whose replacements had

²⁵⁰ Because the fiscal rights to government land, including pasture land and abandoned plots, belonged to the fiscal intendant of each circuit, the fiscal intendants had to be reimbursed the amounts of money they would have earned through sales or rentals of the property. In areas where the value of land was high, such as Liang-che Circuit, mien-i administrators spent more money on the land transfers than it would have cost to pay their wage bill. See HCP, 253, p. 6198; 260, p. 6345; SHY, shih-huo 65, p. 14b; SS, 177, pp. 4306-7. For a discussion, see Higashi Ichio, O Anseki shimpo, pp. 727-35.

²⁵¹ HCP, 217, pp. 5283-4.

²⁵² HCP, 218, p. 5301.

arrived" (who would have had to return to the capital anyway) and military servitors (shih-ch'en) to muster porters and lead the convoys, all at prices below what former local supply masters were willing to accept. Wang An-shih immediately seized upon Chin's plan as a prototype for transferring supply-master responsibilities to replaced or cashiered officials, whom he insisted "would compete for transport duty without cease" if they were given cash incentives to escort convoys back to the capital.²⁵³

It was also common to replace supply masters with military personnel, a recommendation made early in the hired-service policy debates.²⁵⁴ Even military men had to be paid something for their services: in Ching-hsi's Hsü prefecture in 1071, military functionaries (rank not specified) were paid a "sustenance fee" of 3000 cash per month to manage the prefecture's public storehouse (kung-shih-k'u) in place of civilian supply masters, who one after the other were being sucked dry by the position's vulnerability to clerical corruption.²⁵⁵ On the whole, however, replacing civilian supply masters with soldiers allowed the government to shelter its wage fund and "deposit" (chuang, feng-chuang) the surplus for other purposes.²⁵⁶

In general, then, professionalization of the supply master position and the concomitant shift from command to market mobilization was at least partly supplanted by a parallel effort to save money by absorbing the supply-master functions into the civil service and military bureaucracies. The expansion of pao-chia organizations throughout the country had a similar effect on reform of the bowman (kung-shou) or county militiaman's position, the second post targeted by the hired service measure. Wang An-shih had always hoped that the system of detached service under the county sheriff would enable the court to replace hired bowmen with conscripted pao-chia guardsmen.²⁵⁷ By 1076 Wang's hope had been partially realized. According to a report by the censor Teng Jun-fu, in the five circuits of north China bowman strength had been cut by seventy or eighty percent, from a range of 70 to 140 bowmen per county down to a mere 15 or 30. The remaining troop strength was made up by the pao-chia guardsmen and i-yung militia men, rotated in from the outside for half-month tours of detached service (shang-fan). Though Teng deplored the extent to which reducing the number of bowmen undermined local security, from the fiscal perspective the replacement of hired bowmen by conscripted pao-chia guardsmen allowed the government to save even more of its hired-service funds.

²⁵³ HCP, 229, pp. 5576-7. Chin offered one-hundred full strings of cash for every 10,000 bolts of silk transported, and 70 full strings for each 10,000 strings of cash. An earlier official had proposed 500 full strings for every 10,000 count of either silk or cash.

²⁵⁴ HCP, 227, p. 5523.

²⁵⁵ HCP, 222, pp. 2a-b.

²⁵⁶ HCP, 268, p. 6569.

²⁵⁷ HCP, 235, p. 5697.

Inevitably, the reduction of government service personnel and replacement of civilians by civil and military officials prompted calls for a parallel reduction in the various service exemption fees.²⁵⁸ But the whole point of reducing the number of hired civilians, from the perspective of the New Policy planners, was to free up the service funds for other, potentially more remunerative, uses. In 1075.9, after it boasted about the success of the hired service policy in cutting supply master positions, paring costs, and regaining control over ferry and winery profits, the Ssu-nung ssu was ordered to "deposit" (chuang) one part of its surplus, lend out a second part to the public as interest-bearing loans, and distribute a third part -- one million strings of cash a year in winery and ferry installation fees -- to state trade bureaus around the country to finance their purchase of commercial goods for resale in the capital.²⁵⁹ One year later the revenue stream from both the wineries and ferries and the entire surplus-fee fund were formally severed from the hired service policy; transformed now into unencumbered revenue, they were to be pumped back into the Ever-normal Granary system, where they could beget more money.²⁶⁰

By the end of Wang An-shih's tenure the service exemption funds, like the green sprouts loans, had become a robust source of revenues. In 1076 the government spent only 6.4 million strings of the 10.4 million strings it collected in service-exemption fees, for a surplus of 4 million strings. At the same time, the fund contained 8.5 million strings of unused "current funds" (hsien-tsai) -- in some circuits equal to an entire year's income -- built up through underspending and the accumulation of surplus emergency (k'uan-sheng) fees up to 1076. The winery and ferry account was equally well capitalized, with an income of 2.1 million units (primarily cash) over expenditures (1.7 million units).²⁶¹ Nor did the fiscalization of the hired-service funds end with Wang An-shih's retirement. Despite the efforts of officials such as Chou Yin, Shen K'uo in late 1076, Lü T'ao in 1077, and Liu I in 1082 to reduce hired-service collections to the actual wage bill or relink the wine and ferry fund to hired service, both accounts continued to grow as the number of civilian government service agents hired shrunk or stayed stable. In 1084, the government collected or held 18,729,300 million strings in service exemption fees, and

²⁵⁸ For examples by Chou Yin and Shen K'uo see HCP, 279, pp. 6825-6. The Court of Agricultural Supervision (ssu-nung-ssu) insisted that such calls were misguided, since they ignored the expense incurred by hiring soldiers to replace service men: HCP, 268, p. 6569.

²⁵⁹ HCP, 268, p. 6569.

²⁶⁰ SHY, shih-huo 65, p. 16a.

²⁶¹ Miyazawa, "HokuSo no zaisei to kahei keizai," pp. 329-32; Sudo, "O Anseki no boyakusen," pp. 218-19.

5,050,090 strings in wine and ferry fees. The transformation of the hired service policy into a mechanism of revenue extraction was complete.²⁶²

It is doubtful whether that transformation could have proceeded so far had the entire population not been organized into pao-chia mutual security units, providing administrators with a relatively cheap system of conscription.²⁶³ For not only did expansion of the pao-chia system enable the government to replace county-level bowmen with cheaper pao-chia guardsmen on detached service; it also reversed the trend towards putting the village-level posts of elder (ch'i-chang), household chief (hu-chang), and stalwart (chuang-ting) on a hired basis.

Because the trend towards monetizing village service never went beyond an ad hoc, localized movement, its full extent is impossible to trace. But from two Southern Sung sources it is clear that as early as 1069 some parts of the country began to hire rather than conscript men for the village posts of household chief (hu-chang), with responsibility for tax collection, and the elder (ch'i-chuang) and his subordinate the stalwarts (chuang-ting), with responsibility for bandit and fire control.²⁶⁴ The experiment was short-lived, however, for between 1071 and 1074 hireage was abandoned in favor of a return to the conscription of men for all three posts.²⁶⁵

Why the monetization of village posts lapsed just as hireage was being pushed at the county and prefectural level is unclear, but the spread of pao-chia certainly provided both incentive and opportunity. The pao-chia system was made universal in 1073, and one year later the court abolished the positions of household chief and its urban counterpart the neighborhood headman (fang-cheng), and transferred their tax-pressing

²⁶² HCP, 350, p. 14a; SS, 177, p. 4310; Sudo, "O⁻ Anseki no boyakusen," p. 222. For Lü T'ao's complaint see Lü Tao, Ching-te chi, 1, p. 2b; for Chou Yin, Shen K'uo, and Liu I, see HCP, 279, pp. 6825-6 and HCP, 324, pp. 1b-6a.

²⁶³ The critical links between pao-chia and the hired service measure are stressed by Sudo Yoshiyuki in "So⁻ dai go⁻ sonsei no henshen katei," To⁻ So⁻ shakai keizaishi kenkyu⁻ (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 561-644, esp. pp. 577-96 and in "O⁻ Anseki no shimpo⁻ to sono shiteki yigi," So⁻ daishi kenkyu⁻ (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 2-10; and by Higashi Ichio, O⁻ Anseki shimpo⁻, pp. 691-812.

²⁶⁴ The two sources are the 1182 Fu-chou gazeteer, Liang K'e-chia, comp., Ch'un-hsi San-shan-chih. (Sung-Yüan ti-fang-chih ts'ung-shu ed., Taipei, 1980), 14, p. 7744, and a memorial by Ch'en Fu-liang (1137-1203), "Chuan-tui lun i-fa cha-tzu," in his Chih-chai hsien-sheng wen-chi (SPTK ed., Taipei, 1979), 21, pp. 119-20. For analysis see Sudo, "So⁻ dai go⁻ sonsei," p. 578.

²⁶⁵ In place of salaries, the elder, stalwarts, and household chief received tax and mien-i fee exemptions during their term of service. See Ch'en Fu-liang, Chih-chai hsien-sheng wen-chi, 21, p. 120.

duties to the pao-chia organization.²⁶⁶ Then in 1075 the regulations were tightened up and the mutual security apparatus made the unified representative of the state at the village level, responsible for all local public functions: in all counties where pao-chia was in effect, all elder and any remaining household-chief and stalwart positions were abolished, and their collective duties subsumed into the pao-chia system. The pao-ting guardsmen were designated as the primary collection agents of the state, responsible for collecting all taxes, service-exemption fees, and green-sprouts repayments. At the same time the tasks of the elder, including fire control and bridge and road repair as well as security, were transferred to the top echelons of the pao-chia system -- the superior or deputy superior guard leaders (tu-fu pao-cheng) and the large guard chiefs (ta-pao-chang). One new position, termed the "messenger" (ch'eng-t'ieh jen), was created in order to assist the local pao-chia leaders in their new tasks. Each superior guard leader -- who was responsible for 250 households -- was allowed to hire two messengers, who were charged with managing the unit's documentation and communication. The fact that messengers were hired made them the sole exception to the return of command mobilization at the village level, but because the position required literacy it was not easily subject to conscription.²⁶⁷

Shen-tsung did worry that because service exemption fees were now universal, the people would view the transfer of tax-collection responsibilities to the pao-chia guardsmen as a breach of trust; moreover, he felt that it was improper to require superior guard leaders to take on new tasks in addition to overseeing military training. But Wang An-shih minimized the impact of the tax collection burden on the guardsmen, at the same time that he revealed a basic ambivalence towards relying on the market to mobilize labor for government functions. In the times of the former kings, Wang insisted, everyone in the population performed multiple tasks; "if [now] the people are ordered to do nothing more than military drill, I do not know who could be counted on to perform the remaining tasks [of local government]."²⁶⁸

In the end, the reformers were unable to backtrack completely on enlisted local service. In 1081, an official of the Bureau of Military Affairs reiterated Shen-tsung's complaint about foisting tax-pressing duties on men who had paid service exemption

²⁶⁶ HCP, 257, pp. 6277-8. Tax-pressers (called ts'ui-shui chia-t'ou) were mustered from among master households and were obliged to keep up the tax-lists and supervise one tax collection, in addition to their security service. See Sudo, "So-dai go-sonsei," pp. 579-80.

²⁶⁷ The messengers were paid with funds that would have otherwise have gone to the elder and stalwart, either as maintenance fees or as vestiges of their hired service wages. For the entire reform, see HCP, 263, pp. 6436-7. Every ten to thirty master households had to put up their own guardsmen to collect taxes, but any single guardsman only had to undertake the responsibility for a single tax period, and according to Wang An-shih only once every decade or so: HCP, 263, p. 6451.

²⁶⁸ HCP, 263, pp. 6450-1.

fees, and reported that in the K'ai-feng region, poorer guardsmen proved powerless to compel rich households to pay their taxes and fees. As a result, in K'ai-feng, drafted guardsmen were replaced as tax pressers by paid "messengers." But in a compromise that embedded market mobilization within the pao-chia command structure, overall supervision of tax collection still rested with the superior guard leader.²⁶⁹

Because of lacunae in the records there is no way of knowing whether the spread of the pao-chia system subverted plans by the reform leadership to extend the voluntary, marketized provisions of the hired service measure to village as well as county-level service. But contemporaries and near-contemporaries assumed, with Shen-tsung, that the payment of service exemption fees ought to confer immunity from village-level service, and hence that pao-chia undermined the progressive aspects of the service exemption policy and exacerbated its fiscalist potential. In 1076, for example, the censor Chou Yin urged the court to sever the ties between pao-chia and village-level administration, and to return to the hiring of elders and household chiefs, as specified in the original service-exemption regulations.²⁷⁰ Nine years later, as Shen-tsung's death put the reforms under attack, the county magistrate Shang-kuan Kung-ying protested that the replacement of village level posts by the pao-chia system contravened the goal of the service exemption policy "to collect money from the people exclusively to provide wages for service, and not to meet the ordinary financial needs of the nation;" and he insisted that if the posts of elder, stalwart, and household chief were no longer necessary, then the service exemption fees should be commensurately reduced.²⁷¹ But perhaps with insight the Southern Sung observer Ch'en Fu-liang saw the situation most clearly: from the perspective of the reformers, the pao-chia system provided an opportunity "to make profits on and stockpile (feng-chuang) the hired service wage fund."²⁷²

State trade

The state trade act was less hampered by competing and contradictory goals than the green sprouts, hired service, or pao-chia policies, and despite its resounding redistributionist rhetoric it was the most thoroughly transformed into a mechanism for generating revenues. Early on Wang An-shih had assured the emperor that the interest payments generated by commercial loans would provide ample funds for the state's

²⁶⁹ HCP, 311, pp. 5a-6a.

²⁷⁰ HCP, 279, p. 6825.

²⁷¹ HCP, 360, pp. 13a-b. Shang-kuan was serving in An-fu County, Chiang-hsi, at the time.

²⁷² Ch'en Fu-liang, Chih-chai hsien-sheng wen-chi, 21, p. 120. During the Southern Sung the pao-chia system developed into the basic unit of rural administration, while the service exemption fee joined the list of local taxes that were funnelled out of their region to finance the military budget. See Sudo, "So dai go sonsei," pp. 600-23; Sogabe Shizuo, "O Anseki no hoko ho," pp. 33-63.

financial needs.²⁷³ Despite sharp resistance that jeopardized even the emperor's support of the reforms, Wang and Lü Chia-wen resolutely expanded the organizational domain, geographic range, and operational scope of the state trade bureau, transforming it from a capital-centered regulatory agency intended to promote commerce, to an empire-wide credit and wholesaling operation dedicated to amassing revenues.

Demonstrating a keen understanding of organizational power, Lü Chia-wen quickly asserted control over all the government's commercial operations in the capital. In the single month of June 1072.5 the state trade bureau gained dominion over the Bureau of Monopoly Goods (ch'üeh-huo-wu), the Central Commercial Tax Bureau (tu shang-shui-yüan), and the General Sales and General Purchase Markets (tsa mai-ch'ang, tsa-mai-wu). With these acquisitions the state trade bureau gained control over the sale of commercial permits for the trade in government-controlled tea, salt, and imported incense and medicinals; the collection of commercial taxes in the capital; and the procurement and resale of commercial goods acquired for the court.²⁷⁴ The state trade bureau's control over commerce in the capital also increased the funds available to it for investment in interest-bearing loans, for as chief collector of commercial taxes in the capital, the bureau inherited the market usage surtax (shih-li-ch'ien) of six cash that was added to every hundred cash of commercial taxes.²⁷⁵ This revenue stream was further augmented by the imposition in mid-1073 (1073.5) of the "guild exemption fee" (mien-hang ch'ien), a cash fee paid by all of K'ai-feng's commercial guilds in lieu of providing actual goods or services to the government. Although intended like its model the service exemption fee to be progressive, the guild exemption fee ended up as a flat levy imposed on all vendors, including such petty traders as the water-sellers (t'i p'ing-che), who despite no previous responsibilities to the state now had to form into guilds before they could ply their wares in K'ai-feng.²⁷⁶ In order to provide an outlet for its expanded supply of cash, the state trade bureau took over the Central Collateralized Loan Bureau (ti-tang-so), a unit of the K'ai-feng prefectural financial administration that accepted valuables from the public as security for interest-bearing cash loans, and soon opened five installations around the city to lend out surplus market-usage and guild-exemption funds. By 1074.4 the credit operation had been pushed out to the suburban county of

²⁷³ "Shang wu-shih cha-tzu," Wang Lin-ch'uan ch'üan-chi 41, p. 239, cited in Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i-fa shu," p.185. This section draws heavily on Liang Keng-yao's sources and analysis.

²⁷⁴ SHY, chih-kuan 27, pp. 8b, 38a; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 187.

²⁷⁵ Cheng Hsia, "Shang huang-ti lun hsin-fa k'ai-liu min-t'u," Hsi-t'ang-chi (SKCS ed.) 1, pp. 9a-10b; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 190. The surtax was initially designated for the pool of funds used to pay clerical salaries under the new ts'ang-fa measure; but by 1073 Lü Chia-wen had raised the surtax to ten cash per transaction, regardless of the size of the basic commercial tax, in order to swell overall revenues.

²⁷⁶ Cheng Hsia, "Shang huang-ti lun hsin-fa k'ai-liu min-t'u," pp.1, 8a-9a; HCP, 245, p. 5962; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 191.

Hsiang-fu-hsien, where, according to assisting councilor of state Feng Ching, officials encouraged ignorant poor folk to pawn their grain as well as valuables for emergency cash loans. "They just see that the government is handing out money," Feng complained, "and there are none who can turn it away. So they pile up debts, and when the time comes they cannot repay."²⁷⁷

The financial success of the state trade bureau in K'ai-feng, as well as of its progenitor in western Shan-hsi, encouraged Wang An-shih and Lü Chia-wen to open branch bureaus throughout the country. In 1073.10 the K'ai-feng state trade bureau was upgraded to the status of Superintendency of State Trade (tu t'i-chü shih-i-ssu) and all provincial branches placed under its authority. By the end of the first phase of expansion in 1074 seven provincial bureaus were in operation around the empire; by the end of Shen-tsung's reign at least twenty provincial bureaus had been opened, providing access to every commercial center except western Szechwan, which was dominated by the Superintendency for Tea and Horses.²⁷⁸

Geographic expansion provided an irresistible temptation to Lü Chia-wen to enlarge the agency's role from passive recipient of commercial goods in the capital to active buyer, and finally seller, of goods in the provinces. Any move away from the agency's original designation as a mediating agent between resident and traveling merchants drew censure, and in late 1072 Wang An-shih had to defend the direct sale of fruit in K'ai-feng by explaining that fruit was the medium in which some peddlars wanted to repay their commercial loans, and so state trade officials had to resell the fruit to consumers.²⁷⁹ But this was still an ad hoc method of disposing of a surplus; at the end of the year Lü Chia-wen made the agency's involvement more active by financing private contractors to go out into the provinces to buy up marketable commodities for the state trade bureau.²⁸⁰

This use of commoners and merchants to act as agents of the state was of course controversial, and on several occasions Wang An-shih had to intercede with the

²⁷⁷ SHY, chih-kuan 27, p. 65b; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 192. For Feng Ching's comments see HCP, 252, pp. 6155-6. Smith, "State power," misidentifies the green sprouts loans as the target of Feng's criticism.

²⁷⁸ SHY, shih-huo 37, p. 17b. For sources on and the distribution of provincial state trade bureaus see Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," pp. 188-90 and p. 206, and Higashi Ichio, O Anseki jiten, tables 15 and 16, pp. 54-7. On the battle between the state trade agency and the tea and horse agency for dominion over the lucrative Cheng-tu market see Smith, Taxing heaven's storehouse, pp 154-5.

²⁷⁹ The original complaint was made by Wen Yen-po, who blamed the collapse of a mountain in Hua-chou, eastern Shan-hsi, on cosmic anger at the government's intrusion in the fruit market. See HCP, 239, pp. 5810-1, HCP, 240, pp. 5826-8.

²⁸⁰ HCP, 241, p. 5874; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 192.

emperor.²⁸¹ But the state trade agency incurred even greater censure by sending out officials to trade directly in the provinces. In 1074, after Tseng Pu himself complained about officials buying tea in Hunan, salt in Shan-hsi, and silk in Liang-che, Shen-tsung demanded to know where in the state trade legislation it authorized sending officials into the provinces to trade.²⁸² But the imperial pique was somewhat disingenuous, for it was Shen-tsung's own hunger for revenues, as manifested in the rewards and promotions granted Lü Chia-wen and his associates for exceeding revenue quotas, that encouraged the bureau's growing expansion into provincial commerce.²⁸³ The lure of funds finally moved Shen-tsung to openly embrace the revenue goals of the state trade agency, and in late 1074 he lent the agency two million strings of cash from the Inner Treasury to send out "men of special talent" to buy up salt permits and grain in the provinces.²⁸⁴ Four months later, in 1075.2, the agency extended its reach by opening purchase stations (chü) in all commercially strategic places throughout the country.²⁸⁵ Now, in the eyes of reform opponent Su Ch'e, "there were no goods (the state trade agency) would not stoop to buy, no profits it would not seek to commandeer, as it ordered officials and despatched commoners to buy and sell goods in north and south, and to hand out loans in search of interest."²⁸⁶

Up through the end of Wang An-shih's tenure the agency focused on purchasing goods that could be resold to small merchants, but the scope of operations continued to

²⁸¹ In 1072.11, Wang told Shen-tsung that "it is precisely because state trade matters are detailed and picayune that the bureau employs merchants to serve as its managers." In 1073.8, he insisted that a commoner-broker sent out on behalf of the state trade agency to trade with the Liao was no less trustworthy or decorous than any of the emperor's intimates. See HCP, 240, p. 5827; 246, pp. 5995-6.

²⁸² HCP, 252, p. 6159; 253, p. 6188. Tseng Pu's complaint was part of a wider uproar, dealt with in the next section, that forced Wang An-shih into temporary retirement.

²⁸³ HCP, 245, p. 5962; 256, p. 6256; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p.194.

²⁸⁴ HCP, 257, p. 6280; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p.208. By re-purchasing salt permits at extremely low prices from merchants who had already paid cash for the licenses, the state increased the amount of money it squeezed out of the merchants by devaluing the permits.

²⁸⁵ HCP, 260, p. 6331.

²⁸⁶ Su Ch'e, "Tzu Ch'i-chou hui lun shih-shih shu," Luan-ch'eng chi, 35, p. 14a. (Su dates the memorial at seven years after his resignation from the Finance Planning Commission, in 1069.8.) In the last month of 1075 the agency was authorized to buy 3 million catties worth of tea a year for resale on credit to itinerant peddlars who hawked it throughout Ho-pei and Shantung, earning a rebuke from Lü T'ao; see his "Tsou ch'i pa Ching-tung Ho-pei lu she-fang ta-fang ch'a chuang," Ching-te-chi, 3, pp. 9b-10b; SHY, shih-huo 37, pp. 23b-4a.

expand even when Shen-tsung took over the reins of state. By 1078, the state trade agency had acquired such a stockpile of commodities that the court authorized it to begin retailing its stocks in the provinces for cash (pien-chuan), with an incentive schedule for officials pegged to specific sales targets.²⁸⁷ This explicit intervention into local consumer markets was followed by the expansion of collateralized loan stations (ti-tang-so) throughout the country, to generate funds for Shen-tsung's war on the Tanguts. New loan stations were opened in K'ai-feng and the capital region in 1081 and 1082, and then in every circuit in 1083, when they were capitalized by green sprouts and service exemption funds. Even as late as the fifth month of 1085, two months after Shen-tsung's death, the ministry of finance recommended that loan stations be set up in all but the most commercially backward areas of the empire.²⁸⁸ By the end of Shen-tsung's reign an agency that was meant to curb the power of the engrossing monopolists had itself turned into the largest engrosser in the empire, "stockpiling any goods the people might use, monopolizing any transaction that might bring them profit . . . and forcing merchants to a halt."²⁸⁹

Like all monopolies, however, the state trade agency was extremely profitable. For the single year of 1076.10 to 1077.10, the state trade agency reported net returns (hsi-ch'ien) of 1.41 million strings of cash, a return of 28 percent on its basic capitalization of 5 million strings at that time.²⁹⁰ By 1085 the basic capitalization had more than doubled, to 12.26 million strings, which at the same rate of return should have yielded 3.45 million strings in interest. But by then the state trade agency and its debtors were overextended, forcing the court to issue reductions or cancellations on the interest owed on loans and credit purchases, while seeking to protect its principal.²⁹¹

We can be more precise about the profitability of the New Policies as a whole, which very significantly enriched government coffers. One historian estimates that in 1077 the major revenue measures -- state trade, green sprouts, and hired service -- added an extra 18 million strings, or 33 percent, to the 54 million strings of cash obtained

²⁸⁷ HCP, 294, pp. 12b-13a.

²⁸⁸ Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 225; HCP, 322, p. 11b; 332, p. 5b; 356, p. 7b.

²⁸⁹ The quote is by censor Chao Ju-li (1041-94), in (Ming) Li-tai ming-ch'en tsou-i ed. Huang Huai, et al (repr. Taipei, 1964), 269, pp. 15a-b. Chao's memorial, written around 1077, focuses on the Chiang-nan region, where he claims that state trade agents had undermined the tea, silk, and manufacturing trades that local people relied on for their livelihoods.

²⁹⁰ SHY, chih-kuan 27, pp. 39a-b; HCP, 282, p. 6907. SS, 186, p. 4551 reports a lower figure of 1.3 million strings, made up of interest payments and shih-li fees. The profits earned a bonus of 300,000 cash for director Lü Chia-wen. See also Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 205.

²⁹¹ See SHY, shih-huo 37, pp. 31b-2b.

through traditional currency sources.²⁹² Other than state trade, this new currency stream was collected almost entirely from the agricultural sector of the economy.

In the absence of comparable data on net returns for the rest of the reign period, the surviving figures on cash surpluses can serve as a surrogate measure of the revenue-generating powers of the New Policies. By the end of 1076, the Ssu-nung-ssu had build up a surplus of unspent reserves (hsien-tsai ch'ien) from the rural credit, service exemption, and winery and ferry franchise funds totalling 49.9 million mixed units, including 27.7 million strings of cash.²⁹³ These and later surpluses were used to fill Shen-tsung's treasuries: in 1079 the Ssu-nung-ssu was instructed to deposit one million strings of winery franchise funds annually in Shen-tsung's Inner Treasury; three years later 13 million strings of accumulated funds from the green sprouts, service exemption, and winery and ferry franchise accounts were transferred to the Yüan-feng Treasury, established in 1080 specifically to house profits from enterprises controlled by the Ssu-nung-ssu.²⁹⁴ For Shen-tsung these hoards were to be the life's blood of his campaign against the Tanguts. And though the Tangut war of 1081-1083 exacted an enormous toll in money and men, New Policies revenues were so robust that imperial treasuries remained full into the next reign period. In 1087 the head of the Ministry of Finance, Li Ch'ang, reported that "Our former emperor labored year after year to build up a surplus for border defense. As of now, the green sprouts, service exemption, and winery franchise accounts have yielded surpluses of 56 million strings, while another ten million strings worth of money, goods, and precious metals have accumulated from the sales of rice and salt in the capital and funds stockpiled in the Yüan-feng Treasury. Moreover, another half this amount was spent on the frontier [war]."²⁹⁵

In sum, the surviving figures on surplus revenues suggest that the key reform financial policies generated in the range of one-hundred million strings of cash for Shen-tsung and the reformers, though little of this money was seen by mainstream budgetary

²⁹² Miyazawa Tomoyuki, "HokuSo⁻ no zaisei," Table 4, p. 300. The traditional cash sources were the cash portion of liang-shui (5.59 million strings), commercial taxes (8.07 million strings), the wine monopoly (12.28 million strings), the salt monopoly (22.3 million strings) and new currency (5.95 million strings). Of the new measures, state trade provided 1.41 million strings, service exemption 10.17 million strings, wine and ferry stations 3.87 million strings, and ever-normal granaries -- that is, the interest on green sprouts loans -- 2.3 million strings.

²⁹³ See the Chung-shu tui-pei figures tabulated by Miyazawa, "HokuSo⁻ no zaisei," pp. 327-32.

²⁹⁴ SHY, chih-kuan 26, p. 13a; SHY, shih-huo 52, p. 14a; Wang Tseng-yü, "Ssu-nung-ssu," p. 26.

²⁹⁵ HCP, 407, p. 9b.

agencies.²⁹⁶ But did reform financial measures "multiply the state's revenues without adding to the people's taxes," as Wang An-shih had promised? Contemporaries thought not. Yang Shih (1053-1135), a disciple of the Ch'eng brothers who received his chin-shih degree when Wang An-shih was at the height of his power, lamented what he saw as the unintended slide into confiscatory revenue gathering: "Although the idea behind the New Policies was laudable, in less than a decade even though imperial treasuries overflowed with revenues, the people were put in terrible distress."²⁹⁷ Another observer, Pi Chung-yu, was less willing to give the reformers, including Shen-tsung, the benefit of the doubt. Just after Shen-tsung's death had revived hopes for a conservative restoration Pi wrote to his mentor, Ssu-ma Kuang, that "Wang An-shih stirred the late emperor's heart with his talk of great deeds. But although the late emperor believed in Wang he feared that funds would be inadequate, so he distributed green sprouts loans, set up state trade bureaus, collected service exemption fees, and changed the salt laws. There was no method that might get money out of the people that the government would not employ."²⁹⁸ Throughout the fifteen years of the reforms, opponents argued that although in the short term the New Policies did enrich the state, they did so only by sacrificing the long-term stability and productivity of the economy. Critics catalogued a wide range of abuses perpetrated by the reforms, but focused on three issues that especially highlight the unintended consequences of state activism: opponents collectively asserted that reform financial measures sundered the bonds of the natural community, confronted the natural economy with the demands of a hypermonetized state, and wound up harming most the relatively poor and unprotected classes they were intended to assist.

The impact of the New Policies: the opposition critique

In contrast to Wang An-shih, who depicted rural life as an arena of unbridled domination and mutual antagonism, many other contemporary observers believed that rural society was held together by bonds of communal solidarity and mutual interdependence that were stronger than the centrifugal forces of inequality. Ssu-ma Kuang was perhaps the most persistent advocate of the belief that "although bitterness

²⁹⁶ Shen-tsung and his chief ministers controlled revenues generated by the New Policies, through the Ssu-nung-ssu, and after 1082 the Agency of the Right of the Board of Revenue (hu-pu yu-ts'ao). The fiscal agencies in charge of routine budgetary matters, such as the Finance Commission and its successor, the Agency of the Left of the Board of Revenue (hu-pu tso-ts'ao), were short of cash throughout the reform era. In the specific case of state trade revenues, Chao Ju-li complained that everything the agency gained through its monopolistic practices came at the expense of commercial taxes lost to the Finance Commission, Li-tai ming-ch'en tsou-i, 269, p. 15b. For general discussions, see Wang Tseng-yu, "Pei Sung-te Ssu-nung-ssu," p. 26, and Robert M. Hartwell, "Imperial Treasuries," pp. 70-2.

²⁹⁷ Yang Shih, K'uei-shan chi, 15, cited in Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 171.

²⁹⁸ Pi Chung-yu, "Shang men-hsia shih-lang Ssu-ma wen-kung shu," in Hsi-t'ai chi (TSCC ed., Taipei, 1986), 7, p. 92.

and happiness are not equally distributed, at least rich and poor mutually aid one another in order to guarantee their livelihoods."²⁹⁹ But he was by no means alone. Cheng Hsia, a one-time protege of Wang An-shih's who became disenchanted with the reforms, reported that he was told the same thing in 1074 when he interviewed refugees from the prolonged drought that had plagued north China for years:

Families rich and poor, great and small, all rely on one another for survival. The poor and small depend on the rich and great for nurturance in the face of their poverty and powerlessness, while the rich and powerful depend on the poor to complete their well-being. The rich and powerful possess property and grain, whereas the weak own no land or dwellings. They must serve as the tenants of others, and there is nothing that they need for peddling or cultivating that they do not obtain through interest-bearing loans from the rich and powerful. The rich in turn prosper daily, and exert themselves on behalf of the tenants who rent their houses and their land.³⁰⁰

According to men who observed the impact of the reforms on the local level, by projecting state power more deeply into local society, the New Policies fractured time-honored relationships of mutual dependency, at great cost to the people and ultimately to the state itself. They were especially adamant about the disruptive effect of the green sprouts loan policy, arguing that instead of protecting poor peasants from the avarice of the rich, the collection of government loans instead subjected poor peasants to the coercive powers of the state. In one of the flood of critiques that emerged as the reforms were being rolled back in mid-1086, the censor Shang-kuan Chün (1038-1115) asserted that although before the green sprouts reform private lenders had charged nominally high interest rates, when it came time to collect they were at least relatively flexible and benign. By the time a peasant finished off paying the ruthlessly efficient agents of the state, however, the price of a loan had risen from the statutory twenty percent to fifty or even one hundred percent of the principal.³⁰¹ At the same time the Left Policy Critic Wang Yen-sou (1043-93) graphically depicted the many minions of the state a green sprouts borrower had to confront: first, in order to register for a loan, he had to pay off the local pao-chia leaders, including the large guard chief, tax-pressing chia-tou, and notary for household registrations. Then at the other end of the process, if he fell beh on his payments a government clerk would appear at the door, who had to be bought off with food and drink. But even the clerks could not be bought off forever, and eventually the collection agents would arrive to seize the debtor's property and drag him off to be beaten. Moreover Wang did not assume that the maliciousness perpetrated by the green

²⁹⁹ See Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i pa t'iao-li-ssu ch'ang-p'ing-shih shu," in SMWC, 44, p. 562.

³⁰⁰ Cheng Hsia, "Liu min," Hsi-t'ang chi (SKCS ed.), 1, p. 13a.

³⁰¹ HCP, 378, pp. 17b-18a.

sprouts measure was intentional; it was simply the unavoidable consequence of government interference in the rural economy: "To strive intentionally for the benefit of the peasantry is not as good as bringing them benefit by leaving them alone."³⁰²

The disruption of communal solidarity was even more insidious in the case of the hired service policy, in the eyes of critics, since here the attempt to replace community-based service agents with semi-professional mercenaries also undermined the interests of the state. According to Wang Yen-sou, the old system of drafted service was built on a solid communal foundation, in which "households on duty" (ying-tang men-hu) with propertied roots in the community were kept afloat during their period of service by neighbors who came to their aid with labor and material assistance. Under the hired service system, however, well-established local families were replaced by "vagrant riff-raff from the market place" who used their positions as guardians and scribes at the government's granaries, tax stations, treasuries, and financial bureaus to intimidate local citizens and embezzle state property. Wang Yen-sou was just one of many conservatives who doubted that the market-place could provide reliable and responsible professionals. For Wang, as for Ssu-ma Kuang, Chang Fang-p'ing, Liu Chih, and Yang Hui, only local men with property in the region could be trusted to manage the government's property; no bond or collateral could prevent sojourning mercenaries from engaging in graft or absconding with the government's property, then changing their names and volunteering for work elsewhere.³⁰³

The hired service measure was also held responsible for subverting the communal focus of the pao-chia system, which if anything was intended to reinforce communal organizations by transforming them into compulsory, bureaucratized units. In 1076 censor Teng Jun-fu (1027-1094) charged that the use of local pao-chia guardsmen on detached service to replace county-level bowmen, one of the mien-i hiring categories, had shattered a natural defense and surveillance network built on personal relationships, leaving local communities powerless to control rising banditry in the Shantung and Fuchien regions. Teng memorialized that "under the old system (prior to hired service and paochia) a large county claimed about 140 bowmen, a medium county one hundred, and a small county not less than seventy to eighty bowmen. Although in name only one person was drafted into service, in fact when it came time to quell bandits all the remaining men rose up as well. The rural compatriots and relatives all acted as the eyes and ear [of the bowmen]. . . . People were at peace in their old villages and did not lightly dare to leave them, and it was this that allowed them to control banditry."³⁰⁴

³⁰² HCP, 376, pp. 17a-b.

³⁰³ HCP, 364, pp. 6b-9a. The last charge is by Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i pa mien-i i chiu ch'ai-i cha-tzu," SMWC, 49, pp. 626-8. See also HCP, 224, pp. 5444-6 (Yang Hui) and HCP, 277, pp. 6787-91 (Chang Fang-p'ing).

³⁰⁴ HCP, 279, pp. 6834-5.

Although critics no doubt exaggerated the harmoniousness and solidarity of rural communities prior to the reforms, their anecdotal portraits do highlight the disruptive intrusiveness of the state under the New Policies. Moreover, there was a broad consensus that the disruption of local communities was exacerbated by what may be termed the hypermonetized demands of the state under Wang An-shih and Shen-tsung. Despite the considerable spread of commerce and market relationships that characterized the eleventh-century economy, money was distributed very unevenly through Sung society. During the momentary flowering of criticism that the emperor allowed in 1074, Ssu-ma Kuang offered a widely shared view of the limited place of money in the economy:

There are some rich merchants and great traders who possess great stores of cash, but among the peasantry wealth is measured by the possession of more land and larger stocks of grain, [and is acquired by] maintaining better buildings and dwellings and working their oxen without cease. Nowhere do peasants amass tens of thousands of cash in their homes. As for the poor peasants, their tattered rags do not even cover their bodies, nor does their coarse fodder fill their bellies. In the fall they hope their crops will ripen in the summer; come summer they look towards the harvest in the fall. Some of them must even work as share-cropping tenants for others. Surely there are none among them with any knowledge of money.³⁰⁵

Ssu-ma's contention was shared by Chang Fang-p'ing, who in 1076 wrote that in the poor hamlets of Ying-t'ien-fu (Ching-tung W.), "at the time of the winter sacrifices the poor peasants carry their firewood and straw into the town market, a round trip of ten li, where they sell it for 50 or 70 cash. With this money they buy some onions, eggplant, salt, and vinegar, and young and old regard it as sweet and beautiful. Throughout their days, what do they know of a single [extra] cash." Even the reform lieutenant Teng Wan (1028-1086) described an autarkic rural economy in which stubborn and fearful peasants raised silkworms for their clothes, worked the land for their food, and from youth to old age never passed through a market gate or saw a government yamen.³⁰⁶

By contrast Shen-tsung, Wang An-shih, and their followers were obsessed with the idea of money, whose role in the economy they seem to have seriously exaggerated. The reformers valued money because it was liquid, and could be exchanged for goods and services when and where they were needed; because it was estuctible, and could be stored in treasuries with no fear of spoilage; and because it was expandable, and could be made to grow through minting, of course, but also through government control over commutation rates between money and goods, and by the seemingly inexhaustible power of interest on money constantly recirculated into the economy. The government's

³⁰⁵ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ying chao yen ch'ao-cheng ch'üeh-shih chuang," SMWC, 45, p. 575. In 1086 Ssu-ma insisted that "even the richest landowner never has more than several hundred strings of cash at most." See "Ch'i pa mien-i," SMWC, 49, pp. 626-8.

³⁰⁶ HCP, 277, p. 6789; 269, p. 6605.

obsession with the idea of turning goods into cash and pumping cash into the economy was no more clearly manifested than in the Szechwan tea monopoly, where official placards enjoined tea-market functionaries to "expedite the rapid purchase and sale of tea, prevent the stagnation of capital."³⁰⁷

If Wang An-shih was obsessed with increasing the flow of revenues to the state, the fundamental rationale of his reform program was that he could do so without diminishing the resources of the people. To recapitulate Wang's argument, under the stimulation of the state goods and money would circulate freely, unimpeded by private monopolies or bottlenecks caused by outmoded quotas for command-mandated goods and services; this free circulation of goods and money would in turn produce new wealth for the state without increasing fiscal claims on the people. According to his opponents, however, Wang's policies led to a very different set of outcomes: in their view, the confrontation between a cash-hungry state and an imperfectly monetized economy resulted in increased monetary taxes, a currency crisis, and economic dislocation and stagnation.

The chief contributor to the rise in taxes came from the service exemption fees and the surplus emergency fee (k'uan-sheng ch'ien) surtax. Although by monetizing government service the reformers hoped to minimize the burden borne by upper-grade households, critics adduced statistics to prove that the annual fees on rich households were far higher than the cost of periodic service had ever been before. In 1082 Liu I, the Ever-normal Granary Intendant for Chiang-nan, estimated that the richest households in neighboring Liang-che Circuit paid up to 800,000 cash annually in service exemption fees, eight times more than the periodic draft had cost them prior to the reforms.³⁰⁸

Critics were divided on how harmful the hired service policy was to the rich in general, since in counties with low overall mien-i quotas spreading out the costs of government service could work to the advantage of the wealthy.³⁰⁹ But they all joined Chang Fang-p'ing in condemning the extension of service exemption fees to lower grade households as a way of "taxing those too poor to meet their needs in order to subsidize the powerful who possess more than they need."³¹⁰ The intrinsic regressivity of the

³⁰⁷ Lü T'ao, "Tsou wei ch'a yüan-hu an-che san-fen chia-ch'ien..." Ching-te chi, 1, p. 11a. For a recent article on the manipulation of commutation rates see Chang Hsi-wei, "Sung-tai che-pien-chih t'an-hsi," Chung-kuo-shih yen-chiu, No.1 (1992), pp. 26-33.

³⁰⁸ HCP, 324, p. 3b.

³⁰⁹ When Chang Tun tried to halt the rising tide against the hired service policy in early 1086, he seized on the fact that Ssu-ma Kuang himself was divided over whether the measure was good or bad for the wealthy. See HCP, 367, p. 4a, which also cites Ssu-ma's arguments. Some critics, such as Wang Yen-sou, thought that the hired service policy might work well if the exemption fees were limited to those families that were liable for the service. See HCP, 364, pp. 6b-9a.

³¹⁰ HCP, 277, p. 6788.

measure was exacerbated by the practice of arbitrarily upgrading lower-grade households in order to meet or surpass revenue quotas. As the hired service policy spread from K'ai-feng to the rest of the country after its universal promulgation in 1071.10, officials in each county were required to set collection quotas based on the the distribution of households in the five-grade hierarchy. This initial grading was the specific job of clerical staff, whom Chang Fang-p'ing charged were spurred on by a court-issued incentive schedule to set collection quotas as high as possible. As a result, "the grasping clerks counted everything as property -- land, huts, ox-tackle, produce, mulberry and jujube trees, even down to the tools, spades, kettles, dogs, and pigs of the most down-trodden families. Since the clerks were aiming for rewards and bonuses, everything was given a cash value [in order to maximize the amount of money each family would have to pay]."³¹¹ Nor did a peasant's problems end with the first grading. As Liu Chih pointed out on his return to the censorate in 1086, once the richest families were ruined by annual service-exemption burdens of hundreds of strings of cash, officials passed their fees onto the remaining population by arbitrarily upgrading the poorer households. Liu's colleague Wang Yen-sou provided a specific example: In Ting-chou's An-hsi County (Ho-pei West), some sixteen-hundred out of a total of thirteen thousand households were ranked in grade four prior to the hired service measure. But because upper grade households could not continue to meet their disproportionate share of the total county quota, officials simply moved everyone up the ladder: 3400 households were upgraded from rank five to four, and over 700 rank four families were upgraded to rank three. And unlike past times, when regrading was predictable and realistic, now "the poorest households can get upgraded at any time even if there is no increase in the value of their meager property, in order to make them pay more in service exemption fees." In every county in the land, Wang Yen-sou declared, the poor were being reassessed to provide mien-i and even more spurious fees that government functionaries ground out of them through the power of the lash.³¹²

By increasing the amount of money taken out of an economy that was only partially monetized to begin with, Wang An-shih's reformers decreased rather than increased the volume of money in circulation, thereby depressing agricultural production. Clearly this was not their intention: during Shen-tsung's reign, Sung mints pumped more copper currency into the economy than at any time before the eighteenth century -- an annual quota of 5.06 million strings, or about 60 cash per capita annually as of 1080.³¹³

³¹¹ HCP, 277, pp. 6789-90.

³¹² HCP, 364, p. 3a-b, HCP, 364, p. 7a-b. At least in some places arbitrary upgrading provided the same disincentive to agricultural expansion that drafted service had: in 1073 Shen-tsung complained that because of fear of the mien-i assessor, peasants were refusing to plant mulberry trees. See HCP, 245, p. 5969.

³¹³ See Yüan I-t'ang, "Pei-Sung ch'ien-huang: ts'ung pi-chih tao liu-t'ung t'i-chih ti k'ao-ch'a," Li-shih yen-chiu, No. 4 (1991), pp. 129-40, esp. p. 131. By contrast, Ming mints produced 3 copper cash per capita in 1393, and Ch'ing mints produced 4.3 cash per capita in 1721. I have adjusted Yüan's figures to reflect a household:ividual ratio of 1 to 5.

This was supplemented by currency introduced into the economy by the green sprouts rural credit measure, which distributed a quota of 11 million mixed units annually, about half of which was in cash.³¹⁴ But despite these annual injections of currency into the economy, more still was taken out by the service exemption fees, the twenty percent surplus emergency fee (k'uan-sheng ch'ien) surtax, the nominal twenty percent interest charged on the green sprouts loans, and the welter of nuisance fees and surtaxes, such as the t'ou-tzu and shih-li fees, that proliferated during Shen-tsung's reign.³¹⁵ This outflow of currency from the local economy hit peasant producers especially hard, for by assessing these new fees in cash the government forced peasants to sell their produce at disadvantageous rates in order to obtain currency to pay their taxes. Yet as local currency became increasingly scarce, the value of a peasant's produce declined. In the parlance of the time, money became dear and goods cheap (ch'ien-chung huo-ch'ing). As Chang Fang-p'ing, a close observer of the deflationary phenomenon, described it: "Because of the green sprouts and service assistance measures, peasants all sell their grain and textiles so they can pay their fees in cash. But cash has become increasingly hard to get, driving down the price of grain and cloth and putting the people in even greater distress. They all call it the 'cash famine' (ch'ien-huang)."³¹⁶

In principle, a significant portion of these funds was supposed to be recirculated back into the local economy: service exemption fees in the form of wages, surplus emergency fee (k'uan-sheng ch'ien) surtaxes in the form of collateral for shortfalls, and even the green sprouts interest payments, as payment for the administration of the ever-normal granary operation. But as we have seen, the government made every effort to divert these new revenue streams from their intended purposes, drawing local funds out of the place of collection to government repositories in the capital and the provinces. Some of this money was pumped back into the economy in the form of clerical salaries and still more interest-bearing loans. But the interest frenzy that overtook Shen-tsung and the reformers was matched by an irrepressible instinct for government hoarding, and

³¹⁴ For distribution and collection quotas and the actual figures for 1080 and 1081, see HCP, 332, pp. 10a-b. The percentage represented by specie is not given, and no obvious surrogates are available. In 1077, currency constituted around half of the discretionary funds (hsien-tsai ch'ien) account for the rural credit operation, or 15.5 million strings out of a total of 37.3 million mixed units. See Miyazawa Tomoyuki, "HokuSo no zaisei," Table 2, p. 328, citing YLTT.

³¹⁵ On the proliferation of fees see Lü T'ao, "Tsou ch'i fang-mien k'uan-sheng i-ch'ien chuang," Ching-te chi 1, pp. 1a-2a. In 1076, Chang Fang-p'ing reported that although the green sprouts measure added 83,600 strings of cash to the Ying-t'ien-fu economy every year, after interest charges there was a net loss of 16,600 strings. See HCP, 277, p. 6789.

³¹⁶ Quoted in Yeh Tan, "Lun Pei-Sung 'ch'ien-huang,'" Chung-kuo-shih yen-chiu, No. 2 (1991), pp. 20-30. As Yeh Tan points out, Chang Fang-p'ing also cited Wang An-shih's relaxation of the prohibitions against the private sale of copper and the export of copper coins as causes of the cash shortage.

much of the cash collected from the peasantry sat uselessly in imperial treasuries. In 1077, Lü T'ao warned that because half of the currency collected in service exemption and surplus-tax fees in the Szechwanese prefecture of P'eng-chou (Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit) was siphoned out of the economy by the government, there was little currency left to circulate in local markets.³¹⁷ A decade later Lü's fellow Szechwanese Su Ch'e reported that the cash famine threatened to stall the once-robust southeastern economy: "Ever since the Hsi-ning period the people have had to pay out cash for service exemption fees and the interest on green sprouts loans. Now strings of cash just pile up uselessly in government storehouses, while officials scour for more cash among the people until there is nothing left. In the markets people have taken to using privately minted small cash, but even so goods do not move and peasants and their wives cannot sell what they grow or spin."³¹⁸

Even without a cash shortage the monetization of agricultural taxes was destabilizing, since it forced poor peasants to produce for the market in order obtain cash for their taxes. When coupled with the deflation brought on by the currency shortage monetization could be ruinous, forcing peasants to sell their meager working capital -- land, oxen, the firewood created by dismantling their houses or cutting down their mulberry trees -- to get cash for their taxes. And here, for conservatives, was the most ironic consequence of Wang An-shih's economic reforms. For the direct beneficiaries of these forced sales was the very class of 'engrossers' that the reforms were intended to suppress: families wealthy enough to pay their own new taxes and yet still have enough cash left to buy up the property of poorer peasants at vastly reduced rates, or to provide usurious loans so they could pay their green sprouts interest. Thus as Ssu-ma Kuang, Liu Chih, Wang Yen-sou and their associates all agreed, rather than suppressing the rural engrossers, Wang An-shih's two agrarian reforms wound up working to their advantage.³¹⁹

Although opponents singled out green sprouts and hired service as the most pernicious of the New Policies, they were no less quick to condemn the state trade and pao-chia measures for subjecting the very categories of people they were meant to protect to the disruptive powers of a state apparatus driven beyond legitimate bounds by the frenzy for revenues. The state trade policy, justified as a way to protect small merchants and itinerant traders from the grip of the great guild monopolists, soon mirrored the regressivity of the hired service act by charging non-guild vendors a guild exemption fee (mien-hang ch'ien) and exacting the market-usage surtax (shih-li ch'ien) on transactions

³¹⁷ Lü T'ao, Ching-te chi, 1, p. 1a-b.

³¹⁸ Su Che, "Ch'i chieh ch'ang-p'ing-ch'ien mai shang-kung chi chu-chou chün-liang chuang," Luan-ch'eng chi, 37, p. 13a, quoted in Yeh Tan, "Lun Pei-Sung 'ch'ien-huang," p. 22.

³¹⁹ See Ssu-ma Kuang, SMWC, 47, pp. 608-9 and 626-8; HCP, 364, pp. 3a-b; 376, p. 17a.

too small even to warrant a commercial tax.³²⁰ Perhaps even more damaging to small traders and their customers was the concerted effort by state trade officials to insert themselves into the place once held by private commercial monopolists. State trade functionaries violated the original intent of the policy so egregiously that in 1074 both its originator -- Wei Chi-tsung -- and its chief sponsor -- Tseng Pu -- turned against the agency:

Lü Chia-wen and his minions devote themselves solely to taking in profits in order to garner rewards. All traveling merchants must sell their wares to the state trade agency, all vendors in the markets must buy what they need from the agency. Moreover the agency buys cheap and sells dear in order to swell its income and pare down its expenditures, so as to bring in profits from every quarter. As Wei Chi-tsung has said, this is nothing less than using the power of the government to act just like the engrossers.³²¹

As shown above, the charges by Tseng Pu and Wei Chi-tsung were just part of the widespread denunciation of state trade agents who monopolized (lung) commerce in the provinces and the capital. By mimicking the monopolistic practices of the private engrossers, state trade agents could have the same depressing effect on trade that the engrossers were accused of. This was illustrated by the trade in glutinous rice (no-mi). Around 1074 the agency monopolized all the glutinous rice shipped by merchants to the capital, a monopoly that it protected by offering rewards of up to 300,000 cash to residents who informed on violators. The agency in turn sold the glutinous rice on credit to the city's wineries, who were its principal consumers. By 1075, however, rice importers reacted against the state trade agency's unrealistically low prices by cutting off K'ai-feng's supply, so undercutting the wine ustry that local wine makers were unable to meet the interest payments for their earlier purchases.³²²

Like its counterpart measures in the countryside, the state trade agency also enforced its financial claims in a far more draconian way than could private monopolists. The K'ai-feng wine makers were relatively fortunate, for faced with the disruption of an essential ustry the court was obliged to forego half the interest accrued by the wineries. Left to its own, the state trade agency could be relentless in collecting its fees. In 1073 Cheng Hsia saw state trade debtors wearing cangues around their necks, their hands laden with house beams and tiles, being led off to the public market to sell the remains of their dismantled homes in order to requite their debts to the state.³²³ And finally, the state

³²⁰ See Cheng Hsia, Hsi-t'ang chi, 1, pp. 8a-10b.

³²¹ HCP, 251, p. 6134.

³²² HCP, 260, pp. 6329-30.

³²³ Cheng Hsia, "T'u-hui ch'eng-wai min chi K'ai-feng jen-hu che-wo mai-wa mu teng shih," Hsi-t'ang chi 1, p. 14a-b. A year later Shen-tsung also complained about the

trade act shared one further trait with its rural counterparts -- its utility to the same rich and influential "engrossers" it was meant to suppress. In 1075 Wang An-shih boasted that because of the success of the state trade act in "smashing engrossers," the only occupation left for the "great names" of the capital was to open pawn shops.³²⁴ But as the historian Liang Keng-yao argues, these pawnshops were probably financed by state trade agency loans. For having shut the rich merchants and residents of K'ai-feng out of commerce, agency officials then clamored to swell revenues by lending these same people money at interest. Despite periodic efforts to exclude the most influential people, including officials and members of the imperial clan, from taking state trade loans, prudence often succumbed to greed, as state trade officials, in their eagerness for revenues and rewards, became the principal financiers of the rich and powerful. Among the chief beneficiaries of this largesse were state trade officials themselves and their kin, who were among the most prodigal borrowers of agency funds. By 1078, for example, the maternal relatives of Chi Feng, the state trade intendant for the lucrative frontier bureaus in Ch'in-chou and the recently-created Hsi-chou (Ch'in-feng circuit), had amassed a debt of 120,000 strings of cash; one year later the one-time state trade official and Szechwan tea and horse intendant, Liu Tso, owed 180,000 strings of cash.³²⁵ And the rich and powerful continued to amass debts to the state trade agency throughout the 1080s. By mid 1085, when the restoration government began discounting the loans, a total of 27,155 K'ai-feng families owed combined debts of 2.37 million strings of cash to the state trade superintendancy. Sixty-five percent of this debt was owed by only sixty-two families -- thirty-five "great names" (ta-hsing) and twenty-seven wine makers -- who averaged 24,838 strings of cash per borrower. The remaining 830,000 strings of cash were distributed among 27,093 "small names" (hsiao-hsing), at an average of 30 strings per borrower.³²⁶

Finally, the pao-chia system, the last piece in Wang An-shih's program to expand state control over society and the economy, also wound up impeding economic productivity and enhancing the power of rural magnates. The chief cause of both problems was the extension of the program of military drill and review (chiao-yüeh). Originally the drill program for K'ai-feng and the circuits of north China was voluntary, and timed for the slack months of late fall and winter. During the 1080s, however, under the pressure of war with the Tanguts, military drill became compulsory in practice if not in law, and increased in frequency to one training session every five days throughout the

borrowers of state trade agency loans having their property confiscated and their necks placed in the cangue. See HCP, 251, p. 6117.

³²⁴ HCP, 262, p. 6407. See Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," pp. 222-5.

³²⁵ HCP, 294, p. 7b; 298, p. 11a.

³²⁶ Su Ch'e, "Ch'i fang shih-i ch'ien-ch'ien chuang," Luan-ch'eng chi, 38, pp. 11a-13a; Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa," p. 222. In 1085.4, the Secretariat ordered the state trade agency to forgive 70 percent of the interest owed by the great names, and all of the interest owed by the small families. See HCP, 354, p. 3b.

agricultural season.³²⁷ In 1084 Fan Ch'un-jen described the impact of compulsory drill on agriculture in eastern Shan-hsi:

In Shan-hsi this summer's wheat and barley are about to ripen, and all hands are needed to harvest and store it. Otherwise if bandits swarm or winds and rain hit before the harvest is in, then most of it will be lost. . . . But now, because all the strongest men must serve in the paochia units and drill once every five days, agriculture is hampered. . . . Every commoner family with two adult males must send one into pao-chia, thereby losing the labor they need to see to their livelihoods. This is especially trying for poor families with little land.³²⁸

Observers such as Wang Kung-ch'en, Ssu-ma Kuang, and Wang Yen-sou confirm Fan's claim that compulsory drill drew scarce labor out of the fields at critical agricultural times.³²⁹ They confirm also that the training procedures subjected the pao-ting guardsmen, who were mustered from the poorest households, to the whims of the pao-chia leaders, who were selected by law from the richest and most powerful families of each neighborhood. In 1085, Wang Yen-sou described some of the most exploitative demands made on the pao-ting guardsmen by their pao-chia and official superiors:

During training, the large guard chief and the superior guard leader will beat [the guardsman], then the military inspector and his sergeant (chih-shih) will take turns flogging him, followed by the lieutenant (chih-hui-shih) and civilian administrator (kan-tang kung-shih) of the paochia intendant, who will whip him, and then perhaps another lashing by their superior. And if the guardsman tries to flee then he will be flogged by the county magistrate as well. . . . Beyond [this physical abuse] he must make his own garb, buy his own headgear and bow, and repair his own arrows. . . . Moreover, even when at their leisure in their homes, the superior guard leader and assistant leader and the large and small guard chiefs all demand gifts for weddings and funerals, as well as tributes of silk, hemp, rice and wheat at the autumn and summer

³²⁷ Though no statute can be found supporting either change, descriptions by Fan Ch'un-jen and Ssu-ma Kuang indicate that by the end of Shen-tsung's reign military drill was constant and compulsory. See HCP, 345, pp. 15b-16b; Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i pa pao-chia chuang," SMWC, 46, p. 592.

³²⁸ HCP, 345, p. 16a. Compare this with the regulations of 1072 that put the guardsmen under the power of their pao-chia superiors and the military inspectors, HCP, 237, pp. 5769-70.

³²⁹ In addition to SMWC, 46, p. 592 and 47, pp. 606-8, see HCP, 343, p. 8a and 361, p. 5b.

harvests; or they demand that the guardsman treat them to a drink and a meal in the walled markets. Yet even though the guardsman fears falling into the clutches of these men he dare not refuse to do their bidding, for if even one thing is not as they want it then he will be charged with violating the regulations, and be subjected to unlimited thrashing and humiliation.³³⁰

Wang Yen-sou and his fellow conservatives warned that training the guardsmen in military skills while filling them with hatred for their superiors could only foment rather than suppress banditry. This is precisely how Southern Sung critics viewed the consequences of the pao-chia system. Hu Shun-chih (1083-1143), just a child when Shen-tsung died, wrote in 1135 that "Bandits swarmed everywhere during the Yüan-feng period, and it was pao-chia men who were responsible. The policy intended to prevent banditry instead promoted it."³³¹ Nor did training peasants for military service save much money in military expenses. According to the historian Sogabe Shizuo, although in 1081 the paochia system allowed the government to save 1.3 million strings of cash in wages and maintenance for soldiers, the court paid almost the same amount, one million strings of cash, in incentives and rewards for the drill and review program.³³² Even more critically, under the successors of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih, especially Hui-tsung and his chief minister Ts'ai Ching, reliance on pao-chia at the expense of the regular mercenary troops eviscerated the nation's defenses. When the Jurchen threatened in 1126 a rattled court was forced to scour the markets for riff-raff to hire to supplement its ill-trained and panic-stricken pao-chia brigades.³³³

THE NEW POLICIES UNDER SHEN-TSUNG

Although the conservative portrayal of a rapacious fiscal administration preying on Shen-tsung's hapless subjects may not represent the entirety of Wang An-shih's economic measures, its credibility is reenforced by the number of reformers who themselves renounced the policies. Such renunciations must be seen in the context of a political environment heated to the boiling point by competition for the extraordinary career leaps made possible by the reforms, and by the smouldering resentments of those who were passed over. Yet even so it was often differences over economic policy that served as the lightning rod for political defections, sparking such tensions within Wang's inner circle that in 1076 the coalition finally collapsed, putting Shen-tsung himself at the helm of the reforms.

³³⁰ HCP, 361, pp. 5b-6a.

³³¹ Li Hsin-ch'uan, Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu, 96, pp. 3098-99.

³³² Sogabe Shizuo, "Ô Anseki no hokôhō," pp. 17-22; WHTK, 153, p. 1335.

³³³ WHTK, 153, p. 1440. For a review of pao-chia policy under Che-tsung and Hui-tsung see Sogabe, "Ô Anseki no hokôhō," pp. 27-33.

The collapse of Wang An-shih's coalition

After Wang ousted Tseng Kung-liang and Ch'en Sheng-chih from the Council of State in late 1070 internal dissent against the reforms was muted. But in the fall of 1072, T'ang Chiung, a young man who had earned Wang's approval by recommending that Han Ch'i be beheaded for opposing the green sprouts measure, turned against his patron when he was passed over for a promotion to the remonstrance bureau (*chien-yüan*). T'ang retaliated with a flurry of memorials condemning the reforms, but when these were all ignored he boldly seized upon a general audience before the emperor to publicly humiliate Wang An-shih. Ignoring Shen-tsung's efforts to make him desist, T'ang read out a memorial denouncing Wang, Tseng Pu, and their circle as despots, and lambasting the *pao-chia*, service exemption, and state trade measures for embittering the people.³³⁴

T'ang Chiung's attack, for which he was demoted to a minor post in Kuang-tung, was deeply embarrassing to Wang, but it was so obviously tied to personal ambition that it had little further effect. Moreover Wang was then at the height of his influence over Shen-tsung, who had just reaffirmed his trust in Wang by demoting and rustivating an imperial favorite outside the reform circle whose relentless criticisms had triggered another Wang resignation threat.³³⁵ But two years later the situation had changed dramatically, prompting doubts and defections from Wang's followers, his lieutenants, and even the emperor himself. The chief cause of the change was a prolonged drought in North China, a drought so patently severe that Wang's efforts to minimize it earned him an imperial rebuke. Thousands of refugees fled the parched, famine-ridden north for relief in the capital, where they congregated as a direct reproach to the emperor. Shen-tsung was persuaded by his Hanlin advisor Han Wei that the disaster was heaven's punishment for the economic exploitation and military adventurism that characterized the reforms, and in the third month of 1074 he "opened the route of remonstrance," calling on all officials to memorialize him personally on the failings of his government.³³⁶

In Lo-yang, seat of the opposition, Shen-tsung's call for remonstrance was greeted with tears by Ssu-ma Kuang, who sent up his first comprehensive critique of the New Policies since his vow of silence in 1070.³³⁷ Far more damaging to Wang An-shih, however, was a shocking portrait of the victims of drought, tax-gouging, and military mobilization secreted into the court through illicit channels by his erstwhile protege Cheng Hsia (1040-1119). Acknowledged as a disciple by Wang around 1065, Cheng was appointed to a staff position in the Kuang-chou (Huai-nan W.) prefectural administration at the start of the reform era. On his return to the capital in late 1073 Cheng sought to

³³⁴ *HCP*, 237, pp. 5778-82; Williamson, *Wang An Shih*, Vol 1, pp. 271-3.

³³⁵ The official was Li Ping, Chief Edict Recorder in the Bureau of Military Affairs. The Li Ping affair is summarized in *HCP*, 235, pp. 5712-15.

³³⁶ *HCP*, 251, pp. 6137-8; *HCP*, 252, pp. 6147-8.

³³⁷ See "Ying chao yen ch'ao-cheng ch'üeh-shih chuang," *SMWC*, 45, pp. 571-8,

convince his mentor that despite their good intentions the economic reforms, exacerbated by military adventurism, had turned into cruel and oppressive burdens on the people. Meeting nothing but silence from Wang, Cheng Hsia decided to take his case directly to the emperor. With the encouragement of Wang's younger brother Wang An-kuo, an associate of the Lo-yang opposition who resolutely opposed the New Policies, Cheng Hsia vividly portrayed the weak, sick, and naked refugees who thronged the roads out of the northeast with their families and possessions in tow, driven along by the wind and sand. Though the ostensible cause of this panicked migration was drought and famine, the real source of the misfortune was heaven's anger at a government that filled its storehouses to overflowing with such rapacious policies as the green sprouts, state trade, guild exemption, and service exemption measures. The only solution was to placate heaven, by opening the nation's granaries to the people, abolishing Wang An-shih's oppressive fiscal policies, and cashiering Wang himself: "The drought is Wang An-shih's doing; cashier him, and the heavens will give rain."³³⁸

Despite Shen-tsung's vow to read every criticism personally, it was only after Cheng's memorial was routed past reform henchmen to the Office of Transmission (yin-t'ai-ssu) controlled by Han Wei that it even got to the emperor.³³⁹ Its impact on the emperor was made more acute by the fact that it coincided with a dispute over the state trade policy that involved the reform leadership itself. At the heart of the dispute stood Lü Chia-wen, who with Wang An-shih's support had turned the State Trade Agency into a fiscal empire that made Lü even more powerful than his nominal superior, the Finance Commissioner Hsüeh Hsiang. In early 1074 Hsüeh launched an investigation into charges that state trade agents routinely beat and imprisoned brokers and merchants who by-passed the agency. Lü Chia-wen convinced Wang An-shih that the charges were false, but rumors of abuses in the state trade operation, and especially the collection of guild exemption fees, continued to surface. When Tseng Pu replaced Hsüeh Hsiang as Finance Commissioner in 1074.3 Shen-tsung secretly urged him to press on with the

³³⁸ The basic source is Cheng Hsia's composite "Shang Huang-ti lun hsin-fa chin liu-min t'u," Hsi-t'ang chi, 1, pp. 1a-16b, which includes the eight points of Cheng's expose and a synopsis of the explosion at court, based on information that the reform clique charged Cheng came by illegally. For this charge, and for Wang An-kuo's involvement, see HCP, 259, pp. 6310-15. In late 1071, in an audience with the emperor that slowed down his career, Wang An-kuo lamented the fiscalist orientation his brother and the reforms had taken, and warned Wang An-shih that the enmity engendered by the New Policies would endanger the family. But An-kuo placed most of the blame not on his brother, but on Tseng Pu and Lü Hui-ch'ing. See HCP, 227, pp. 5531-42, citing Lin Hsi's Yeh-shih. For Cheng Hsia's letter denouncing the green sprouts, service exemption, state trade, and guild exemption policies see "Shang Wang Ching-kung shu," Hsi-t'ang chi 6, pp. 1a-10b, as well as HCP, 252, pp. 6152-4, HCP, 254, p. 6206, and Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 1, pp. 281-2.

³³⁹ See Hsi-t'ang chi 1, p. 4b. Cheng was later charged with abusing the emergency horse-relay postal route. According to Cheng's biography, as cited in HCP, 252, p. 6168, very few of the remonstrance memorials ever got through Wang's gate-keepers to the emperor.

inquiry, and that very month Tseng and Wei Chi-tsung issued their denunciation of Lü Chia-wen and his minions as reward-seeking usurious monopolists (see above). Though Wang continued to defend Lü Chia-wen to the emperor the affair was getting out of control, and towards the end of the month Wang tried to neutralize the issue by appointing his closest trustee, Lü Hui-ch'ing, to coopt the state trade inquiry from Tseng. Lü Hui-ch'ing had long resented Tseng over changes Tseng made in the service exemption measure, and he now joined with Lü Chia-wen to undermine Tseng and kill the affair, not least by intimidating clerks and merchant witnesses, altering their depositions, and seeking to suborn Wei Chi-tsung.³⁴⁰ But any hope of suppressing the state trade affair was dashed by Cheng Hsia's exposé, whose lurid portrayal of petty traders hauled off in cangues for defaulting on their state trade fees confirmed Shen-tsung's worst fears about the reforms in general. The day after reading Cheng's memorial, Shen-tsung ordered reductions in the guild exemption and market usage fees, temporary suspension of the green sprouts and service exemption measures, and a halt to new registration for pao-chia and the "square-fields" (fang-t'ien) cadastral survey then in progress. When the promised rain fell within a week, Shen-tsung divulged Cheng's memorial to his shaken state councilors. Wang An-shih had no choice but to proffer his resignation, while for his part Shen-tsung was so pressed by his brother and the two dowager empresses into dropping Wang that he had no choice but to accept. In the fourth month of 1074 Wang was relieved of his post as chief minister, and reassigned as prefect of Chiang-ning-fu (Nanking).³⁴¹

Wang An-shih's departure put the reform policies in peril, but in the end Shen-tsung reversed himself on overturning the reforms. Shen-tsung left the choice of a successor to Wang himself, who selected Han Chiang as chief minister, and Lü Hui-ch'ing as Han's replacement as assisting civil councilor. It was Lü Hui-ch'ing who had personally crafted much of the actual reform legislation, and he quickly mobilized reform supporters throughout the bureaucracy to close ranks against the many conservatives who hoped to see the New Policies dismantled in the wake of Wang's ouster. Shen-tsung came down firmly on the side of the reforms, and though he issued an edict promising to rectify shortcomings in the New Policies, at the same time he warned that any attempt by the scholarly elite (shih-ta-fu) to "capitulate to conventionality and try to undermine his laws" would be treated as an unpardonable offense.³⁴² This provided the signal Lü needed to reverse the emergency policy of open remonstrance. His first target was the audacious Cheng Hsia, who since Wang's removal had immediately begun an attack on Lü. As the bearer of bad tidings, Cheng Hsia earned Shen-tsung's wrath, and although

³⁴⁰ The state trade affair, which runs through HCP, ch. 251 and 252, is examined by Li Han, "Ts'ung Tseng Pu ken-chiu shih-i wei-fa-t'iao ti fen-cheng k'an hsin-tang nei-pu ti mao-tun yü wen-t'i (Questions and contradictions within the New Party as seen in Tseng Pu's investigations into state trade violations)," in Teng Kuang-ming and Hsü Kuei, eds., Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi (Hang-chou, 1987), pp. 267-81.

³⁴¹ See especially HCP, 252, pp. 6168-70 and SS, 327, pp. 10547-8.

³⁴² HCP, 252, pp. 6168-70, 6172.

the emperor balked at having Cheng executed he did allow Lü Hui-ch'ing to banish him to administrative arrest in Kuang-nan.³⁴³ Shen-tsung also let Lü Hui-ch'ing bring the state trade affair to a conclusion, by silencing the principals: in 1074.8 Tseng Pu, who was as instrumental in bringing the reforms to life as Lü, was demoted from Finance Commissioner to prefect of Jao-chou (Chiang-nan E.), on a charge of falsifying merchant depositions and financial statistics; Wei Chi-tsung, the real founder of the state trade measure, was cashiered. Lü Chia-wen also received a demotion, to forestall public censure, but in eight months he was back at the helm of the State Trade Agency.³⁴⁴

It was because of his devotion to the New Policies that Lü Hui-ch'ing earned from his contemporaries the derisive sobriquet of "Divine Protector" (hu-fa shan-shen), while the senior but less powerful Han Chiang was termed the "Propagating Abbot" (ch'uan-fa sha-men). Lü Hui-ch'ing sought not only to save the reforms, however, but also to displace Wang An-shih as the reform leader. As the contemporary political observer Wei T'ai (ca. 1050-1110) noted, once men of ambition saw that Lü had gained the ear of the emperor and a chance to topple Wang, they all began to attach themselves to him.³⁴⁵ Lü actively promoted his own cause by destabilizing the Wang An-shih faction. On the one hand Lü tried to coopt Wang's dissatisfied affinal kinsmen, men whose marriages to Wang's relatives had not advanced their careers as far as they had hoped. One month after Wang's resignation, for instance, Lü Hui-ch'ing tried to promote Chu Ming-chih to a lectureship in the National University; this was the same position that Chu, who married two Wang women (Wang's sister, and when she died Wang's niece), had lost in 1071, when it was given instead to Wang's brilliant but imperious son P'ang. Shen-tsung rejected the promotion out of a personal dislike for Chu, but he allowed Lü Hui-ch'ing to give it to another dissatisfied Wang brother-in-law, the classicist Shen Chi-chang, who had also incurred Wang P'ang's hatred.³⁴⁶ On the other hand Lü also fomented attacks on Wang An-shih's reputation, first by attacking Wang An-kuo for his role in Cheng Hsia's memorial, and then by unleashing Teng Wan to play up Wang An-shih's relationship to the Szechwanese Taoist and fortune-teller Li Shih-ning, who was

³⁴³ HCP, 254, pp. 6207-8; 259, pp. 6310-15. As late as 1077, Shen-tsung punished four officials who recommended that Cheng Hsia's punishment be lightened: see HCP, 284, p. 6953. Another victim of the change in political w was Li Shih-chung, who was rusticated to Huai-nan West for demanding the return to high office of Ssu-ma Kuang and the Su brothers: see HCP, 253, pp. 6187-8.

³⁴⁴ HCP, 255, pp. 6237-8; HCP, 262, pp. 6407-8.

³⁴⁵ HCP, 260, p. 6336. For a credible attempt to refurbish Lü Hui-ch'ing's reputation see Chou Pao-chu, "Lüeh-lun Lü Hui-ch'ing," in Teng Kuang-ming and Ch'eng Ying-liu, eds, Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi (Shanghai, 1982), pp. 335-49.

³⁴⁶ See HCP, 226, pp. 5507-10, citing Lin Hsi's Yeh-shih on the Chu Ming-chih tale; and HCP, 253, pp. 6196-7.

implicated in a seditious plot that reached into the imperial family.³⁴⁷ And of course Lü used his new position to build up a private clique (ssu-tang) by demoting enemies and promoting favorites, especially his brothers Wen-ch'ing, Sheng-ch'ing and Ho-ch'ing and his in-laws, the P'u-t'ien Fangs.³⁴⁸

Lü Hui-ch'ing's bid to supplant Wang An-shih sundered the fragile coalition of patron-client relationships that had come together under a single unquestioned leader, and turned policy debate into the unfettered instrument of political ambition. The two adjustments to the service exemption policy that Lü Hui-ch'ing advocated were universally denounced, but whether on their merits or because Lü's fortunes had begun to decline is impossible to ascertain. In 1075.5 Lü introduced the "land in return for service" (kei-t'ien mu-jen) measure, which aimed at building up surpluses in the mien-i fund by letting certain counties pay government service agents with land rights rather than cash; two months later he tried to address the household registration system that made the service exemption policy so controversial, by experimenting with a system of self-registration (the shou-shih fa) that let households report their own wealth according to a set of universally promulgated formulas, enforced by rewards for local informants. The reforms can never have been enacted very extensively, but they quickly earned widespread condemnation and are said to have undermined support for Lü. Wang An-shih memorialized against the land for service measure from his home in Chiang-ning, even as popular outrage against the measures "made everyone under heaven think once again of Wang Ching-kung." By early 1075 Han Chiang, the nominal head of state, could no longer tolerate Lü Hui-ch'ing's policy -- and political -- machinations, and he begged Shen-tsung to bring Wang An-shih back. This was just the opening Shen-tsung needed to recall his mentor, who was more than ready to return: after receiving his summons in 1075.2, Wang made the trip from Chiang-ning to K'ai-feng in a remarkable seven days.³⁴⁹

But some of the bloom was off the reform movement during Wang An-shih's second term as chief minister. For one thing, the long-term problems of drought and famine still plagued north China, forcing the government to cut back on some lucrative reform programs. So many officials advocated food handouts and debt amnesties that Wang An-shih complained that everyone was "competing to ulge the commoners with sympathy," without thinking about the long-term solvency of the economic policies.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ For the case of Li Shih-ning and Chao Shih-chü see especially HCP, 260, pp. 6336-8; 262, p. 6403; 264, pp. 6459-62; and 71, p. 1775.

³⁴⁸ See especially the 21-point indictment and retrospective assessment of Lü Hui-ch'ing by the resolutely independent censor Ts'ai Ch'eng-hsi, in HCP, 269, pp. 6584-90 and 280, pp. 6874-6.

³⁴⁹ HCP, 260, pp. 6336-38.

³⁵⁰ Ironically, one of the officials singled out by Wang was Li Chi, a man so reviled by the public for his cruelty that he was compared in a popular ditty to the black death. See HCP, 297, p. 16a-b. Further instances of his cruelty are noted below. Wang An-shih also

There was also a change in Shen-tsung's attitude, for the twenty-five year old emperor was no longer as ready as he had been to accept the often facile arguments of his fifty-four year old mentor. In the tenth month of 1075 Shen-tsung was shaken by a series of astronomical portents, culminating in the appearance of a comet in the constellation chen that was traditionally interpreted to betoken a sweeping away of the old order. The fearful emperor responded with a fast and seclusion from the public, and issued another call for frank criticism of his government that elicited memorials from Fu Pi, Chang Fang-p'ing, Lü Kung-chu, and Wang's younger brother and reform opponent, Wang An-li. Wang An-shih disparaged the significance of astronomical phenomena, and urged Shen-tsung to once again crush critics of the reforms. But this time Shen-tsung refused, retorting that "the people are seriously troubled by the New Policies." Again Wang tried to minimize the problem: "The people resent all manner of things, like intense cold, heat, and rain. Why does their resentment of the New Policies merit special sympathy?" And once again Shen-tsung demurred: "I wish they did not even have these to resent."³⁵¹

Shen-tsung's temerity drove the melodramatic Wang to his sick-bed for thirteen days. Ssu-ma Kuang thought that after Wang returned from seclusion, at the urging of his nervous followers, Shen-tsung was even more compliant towards him than ever. But in fact Shen-tsung was growing weary of his mentor, and of the disorder in Wang's faction. In the seventh month of 1075 Han Chiang, who despite his position at the head of state had endured five years of self-abnegation and humiliation on behalf of the New Policies, resigned in protest over Wang's selection of a man charged with an administrative offense to head the State Trade Agency.³⁵² More destructively still, Wang's return signalled that Lü had been eclipsed, and forced his partisans to scramble to protect themselves. Under the prodding of Wang's son P'ang, whom Southern Sung historians blamed for all the most despotic traits of Wang An-shih's regime, the one-time Lü supporter Teng Wan and Teng's client Lien Heng-fu began a widespread attack on Lü Hui-ch'ing's family, especially his brother Sheng-ch'ing, and on such "evil associates" as Chang Tun.³⁵³ Late in the year they were joined by Ts'ai Ch'eng-hsi, who charged Lü with factionalism and with conspiring to use his influence in a land purchase. By 1075.9

opposed Shen-tsung's plan to give famine victims in Ting-chou cooked rice gruel (chu, juk) instead of uncooked rice, out of a fear that cooked gruel would make victimization overly attractive. HCP, 264, p. 6458.

³⁵¹ HCP, 270, p. 6628; Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 1, pp. 357-9. See also HCP, 269, pp. 6596-6600.

³⁵² The official was Liu Tso, later to go on to head the Szechwan Tea Market Agency. Shen-tsung was extremely puzzled by Han Chiang's intransigence over the Liu Tso affair. See HCP, 264, pp. 6467-8; 266, pp. 6530-1.

³⁵³ For examples see HCP, 264, pp. 6480-1; 266, pp. 6532-4; 268, pp. 6563-7; HCP, 269, pp. 6598-6600. Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 2, pp. 251-6, recapitulates Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's argument that Southern Sung observers sought in Wang P'ang a scapegoat for Wang An-shih, just as they used Wang as a scapegoat for the emperor.

Lü Hui-ch'ing had had enough: he beseeched the emperor for a complete investigation of all the charges, and was allowed to resign to an outside post as prefect of Ch'en-chou while the case progressed. Although indictments continued to pour in, the evidence of real wrong-doing was scanty, and in 1076.6 Lü Hui-ch'ing counter-attacked with a scathing denunciation of Wang An-shih, who had tried to remain above the fray. When Wang sought an explanation from his son, Wang P'ang admitted that in order to prosecute Lü, he had pushed Teng Wan, Lien Heng-fu, and Lü Chia-wen into manipulating the evidence. Wang reproached his son, who worked himself into such a fury that a boil broke out on his back, from which he died the following month. Distraught over the death of his son and in fear for his position Wang turned on his proxies Teng Wan and Lien Heng-fu, but the emperor's patience had come to an end: in a line that echoes in every source, "the emperor was increasingly weary of Wang An-shih's behavior." In the tenth month of 1076 Shen-tsung let Wang An-shih retire to Chiang-ning.³⁵⁴

Shen-tsung and Ts'ai Ch'üeh

More than in 1074, conservatives now had reason to hope that the emperor's exasperation with Wang An-shih and the entire reform coalition heralded a reversal of Wang's policies. For unlike two years earlier, when Wang was replaced by his closest lieutenants, in 1076.10 Shen-tsung filled the chief minister's post with Wu Ch'ung, a man who despite affinal connections to Wang and long service in the reform-dominated state council was a persistent critic of the New Policies. Wu Ch'ung made it his mission to reform if not abolish the New Policies, and he excited the conservative party by calling for the return to court of many of Wang's most prominent victims, including Ssu-ma Kuang, Lü Kung-chu, Han Wei, Ch'eng Hao, and Su Sung. For their part conservatives outside and moderates inside the government welcomed Wu's appointment with public memorials denouncing the New Policies and with private communications to Wu Ch'ung lending him support.³⁵⁵ Ssu-ma Kuang sent Wu Ch'ung a letter from Lo-yang portraying north China as a land where rich and poor alike had been uprooted by the reforms, spawning swarms of bandits who openly attacked walled cities and murdered officials; and he urged Wu Ch'ung to help awaken Shen-tsung to the evils of the New Policies,

³⁵⁴ SS, 327, pp. 10549-50, translated in Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 2, pp. 51-3. For greater detail see HCP, 266, pp. 6532-4; 268, pp. 6563-7, 6570-9; 269, pp. 6582-90; 276, pp. 6742-3; 278, pp. 6797-8, 6803-4.

³⁵⁵ SS, 312, pp. 10238-41. The Ch'ang-pien entries for 1077 are replete with denunciations of the reforms by censors such as Chou Jun-fu and Chou Yin; Prefects such as Lü T'ao, Chang Fang-p'ing, Wen Yen-po, and even by Han Chiang and Wang Shao (now vice director of the Bureau of Military Affairs), who declared that the exploiter Lü Chia-wen "should be boiled alive to show thanks to heaven" (HCP, 280, p. 6866). The jockeying for position caught Shen K'uo, then Provisional Finance Commissioner, in the middle, when he was impeached by censor Ts'ai Ch'üeh for covertly turning against the service exemption measure once it became clear that political currents were running against the New Policies. See HCP, 283, pp. 6933-5. Wu Ch'ung's son An-ch'ih resigned his post as Intendant of the State Trade Agency as soon as his father was appointed chief minister (HCP, 278, p. 6808).

sweetening his exhortation with the flattering claim that travelers returned from the capital with Wu Ch'ung's name on their lips.³⁵⁶

Hopes for a conservative restoration were short-lived, however, thwarted by Shen-tsung's own autocratic aspirations and the opportunities autocracy provided to political opportunists more interested in riding the emperor's agenda to power than in advancing reform. For despite Shen-tsung's willingness to give conservatives a place at court, he was not ready to abandon his reformist ambitions. On the contrary, he was more resolved than ever to be the activist ruler, running his own government from the throne. As Chu Hsi retrospectively explained to a disciple, having acquired all he needed in the way of political skills from Wang An-shih in the Hsi-ning period, Shen-tsung was eager during the new Yüan-feng era (1078-1085) to manage affairs by himself, using officials only to do his bidding.³⁵⁷ In 1077.5, less than a year after Wang An-shih's resignation, departing censor Ts'ai Ch'eng-hsi charged officials with abetting the drift towards bureaucratic paralysis and autocracy:

Why is it that despite the emperor's abundant virtue, the world is still not well governed? The reason for this tragedy is that the hundred officers do not perform their duties. [In particular], the Secretariat Chancellery (headed by Wu Ch'ung) has abrogated to the emperor its duty to promote and select men of talent, while the Bureau of Military Affairs (under Feng Ching) has forfeited its responsibility for managing troops and selecting generals. Decisions on all matters now come from the emperor alone, and if those decisions do not accord with public opinion, then officials simply say that 'It was all decided by his majesty.'³⁵⁸

One reason that officials were so compliant was fear: by mid-1077 the "road of remonstrance" was again being closed, once more endangering the careers of New Policies critics. The assault on remonstrance came from many quarters -- in 1077 the head of the Szechwan Tea Monopoly alone had four prominent critics of its revenue-gathering practices transferred or dismissed from office -- but they all reflected Shen-tsung's own decision to take up the mantle of reform leader. The man most responsible for chilling political debate was the forty-year old Ts'ai Ch'üeh (1037-1093), who used his facility at reading political ws and manipulating weaker men to quash Wu Ch'ung and the restorationists. The first of the Sung History's "evil ministers," Ts'ai had earned an appointment to the censorate by criticising his mentor Wang An-shih's punishment of a dutiful palace guard in the Hsuan-te Gate incident of 1073.³⁵⁹ Following Wang's

³⁵⁶ "Yü Wu ch'eng-hsiang Ch'ung shu," SMWC, 61, pp. 735-7; HCP, 286, pp. 7002-5.

³⁵⁷ Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu yü-lei 130, quoted in Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, p. 223.

³⁵⁸ HCP, 282, pp. 6908-9.

³⁵⁹ When in 1073.1 Wang had tried to escort the imperial chariot through the Hsüan-te gate on horseback, a palace guard had hailed Wang and beat back his horse. Though

retirement, Ts'ai used his censorial powers to check the rise of potential rivals, such as Acting Finance Commissioner Shen K'uo, who had tilted in the direction of Wu Ch'ung; and to impeach men whose posts he coveted, such as the Drafting Official and Director of the Ssu-nung-ssu, Hsiung Pen. Ts'ai's attacks had the implicit approval of the emperor, who in late 1077 rewarded him with Hsiung Pen's two posts as well as the concurrent post of Director of the Remonstrance Bureau, making Ts'ai by far the most powerful of those officials who "did his bidding:" as head of the Ssu-nung-ssu Ts'ai Ch'üeh "presided over the New Policies;" while as chief remonstrator and drafting official he could monitor people and communications to root out remaining opponents of Shen-tsung's management of affairs.³⁶⁰

Ts'ai Ch'üeh's effectiveness was enhanced by a cruel streak that helped intimidate opponents: in early 1078 Ts'ai took charge of a case in which two officials of the Court of Judicial Review (ta-li-ssu) were accused of taking bribes to cover up a provincial murder case. Ts'ai had the two men cangued and exposed in the sun for fifty-seven days, to the horror of chief censor Teng Jun-fu (who imagined he heard their screams at night) and his assistant Shang-kuan Chün. Teng and Shang-kuan took their concerns about the case to the emperor; but despite convincing evidence of wrong-doing Shen-tsung eventually sided with Ts'ai Ch'üeh. The two censors were demoted and forced to write confessions admitting to malfeasance and factionalism, while Ts'ai was rewarded with Teng Jun-fu's post as chief censor to add to his quiver.³⁶¹ By mid-1078, Ts'ai Ch'üeh had managed to use the bribery case to taint Wu Ch'ung's son An-ch'ih and his son-in-law Wen Chi-fu as well, and both men were cashiered with the original defendants. When Ts'ai Ch'üeh complained that Wu An-ch'ih had been treated too leniently Shen-tsung finally realized that the real target of Ts'ai's campaign was Wu Ch'ung himself; but although the emperor berated Ts'ai, he was captivated by the logic of Ts'ai's defense: "If one man (Ts'ai) cooperates to bring what His Majesty has founded to completion, and another man (Wu) bears grudges and tries to destroy that foundation, how will the people know where to put their hands and feet?"³⁶² Ts'ai's attack on Wu Ch'ung bore its first fruit in 1079.5, when Ts'ai was named to the state council. Wu Ch'ung was still chief minister, but five months later Wu lost his closest ally with the death of the Dowager Empress, spearhead of the

Shen-tsung let the guard and his some nine other men be cudged to placate Wang, he was also pleased by Ts'ai Ch'üeh's remonstrance. The event is given a line each in SS, 327, p. 10546 and SS, 471, p. 13698, but for the full story and its Restorationist interpretation, see HCP, 242, pp. 5898-5901.

³⁶⁰ SS, 471, pp. 13698-701. For Ts'ai Ch'ueh's war on Shen K'uo, whom he denounced as a "devious character," see HCP, 283, pp. 6933-5, HCP, 291, pp. 7114-5, and Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," p. 56. On his acquisition of Hsiung Pen's posts and the remonstrance directorship see HCP, 286, pp. 6999-7000; 287, pp. 7015, 7019; 288, pp. 7053.

³⁶¹ HCP, 289, pp. 7059-63; 7066-8.

³⁶² HCP, 290, pp. 7090-1; 298, p. 9a.

anti-New Policy faction at court. Broken and bereft, Wu Ch'ung was finally allowed to resign in the third month of the new year, and one month later he was dead. In four years he had gone from being the hope of the conservatives to an object of pity, commended for his upright character, but held in derision for his weakness and his refusal to stand up for his beliefs by resigning earlier.³⁶³ Meanwhile though Ts'ai Ch'üeh remained only an assisting councilor of state, the chief minister Wang Kuei (1019-1085) was a man of weak character whom Shen-tsung held in contempt.³⁶⁴ Ts'ai Ch'üeh completely dominated the fearful older man, whom he manipulated like a puppet in the service of Shen-tsung's agenda and his own political ambitions.

The Yüan-feng administrative reforms

Shen-tsung's own agenda was dominated by two paramount objectives. Of course his most abiding goal -- the one that had preoccupied him since before ascending the throne -- was to recover the northern territories. But by the time of his new Yüan-feng reign period, the emperor was also convinced that the structure of his government itself was badly in need of reform.

The Sung bureaucracy was an amalgam of two very different administrative systems, both inherited from the T'ang and Five Dynasties periods. On the one hand, the Sung founder, Chao K'uang-yin (T'ai-tsu), inherited the elaborate bureaucratic apparatus of the high T'ang: the three departments (san-sheng), six ministries (liu-pu), nine courts (chiu-ssu), and five directorates (wu-chien) that in theory covered every aspect of civil administration. Because it located the dynasty's new officials -- many of them holdovers from the T'ang and Five Dynasties regimes -- in a familiar pyramid of job descriptions and authority relations, this formal T'ang model served the needs of political consolidation. But even by the eighth century many of these offices had lost their functional importance, supplanted by a welter of ad hoc organizations such as the Bureau of Military Affairs (shu-mi yüan), the Finance Commission (san-ssu), the censorates, and the increasing number of circuit intendancies that assumed the primary responsibilities for defense, finance, law, and regional administration.³⁶⁵ In contrast to the formal T'ang model, which strengthened ministerial authority at the expense of the ruler, the system of ad hoc organizations could be used to enhance monarchical power, by siphoning away responsibilities of the formal bureaucratic structure and serving as a direct extension of the imperial will. Since each model met a different need the Sung founders retained both, creating the characteristic Sung system of dual appointments. In order to consolidate

³⁶³ HCP, 300, pp. 14b-16a; 303, pp. 8b-9b.

³⁶⁴ See HCP, 291, pp. 7115-6.

³⁶⁵ This section draws heavily on Winston Lo, An introduction to the civil service of Sung China (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 35-78; Kung Yen-ming, "Pei-Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih kai-ko lun," Chung-kuo li-shih yen-chiu, No. 1 (1990) pp. 132-143; and on the assistance of Professor Wang Tseng-yü. For a comprehensive study of the Yüan-feng reforms in the broader context of the late Northern Sung administrative change see Chang Fu-hua, Pei-Sung chung-ch'i i-hou chih kuan-chih kai-ko (Taipei, 1991).

their control over newly conquered territories, "respectable holdovers" from the preceding regime were retained in their positions in the formal bureaucratic hierarchy, but the positions themselves were stripped of functional importance: they became purely titular, or "stipendiary" offices (chi-lu kuan) that conferred rank and salary. Those officials who won the confidence of the new rulers were additionally granted functional commissions (ch'ai-ch'ien) or offices (chih) in the still vital prefectural and county bureaucracies or in the ad hoc organizations, where the real work of the empire was conducted.³⁶⁶ Thus every active official held at least two (though possibly more) concurrent appointments: a purely titular appointment in the formal bureaucracy, such as Grand Master of Remonstrance of the Secretariat (yu chien-i ta-fu), and an active assignment or commission, such as Fiscal Intendant-general of Ho-pei East and West Circuits.³⁶⁷

The Sung system of dual appointments served the useful purpose of differentiating an official's civil service rank, which was ideally a function of his seniority and merit, from his actual job at a given time, which shifted with his own special skills and the needs of the court. But the use of actual if moribund office titles simply to designate rank and to provide sinecures to officials awaiting active assignments proved confusing and expensive. For in order to mollify the large surplus of conquered scholarly elite (shih-ta-fu) and their families the court continued to fill the quota of officials in the departments, ministries, courts, and directorates, even as parallel organizations absorbed more and more of their functions, fostering the proliferation of redundant offices (ch'ung-san tie-ssu). For example, in the case of finance, officials were appointed to the Ministry of Finance (hu-pu) and its subordinate bureaus, such as accounting (tu-chih ssu), but they performed no function; meanwhile in the Finance Commission, where the real fiscal administration took place, a different set of officials were assigned to operational accounting (tu-chih) and census (hu-pu ssu) bureaus. And a similar redundancy of offices characterized the parallel personnel, judicial, and military administrations.³⁶⁸

Over the course of the eleventh century officials charged that the growth of these parallel bureaucracies -- one mostly titular and one entirely functional -- promoted turf wars, administrative inefficiency, and above all a glut of supernumerary officials and

³⁶⁶ Lo, Introduction to the civil service, pp. 59-60.

³⁶⁷ There were the positions held by the first fiscal-intendant general (tu chuan-yün-shih), Fan Chih-ku, in 988. See HCP, 29, p. 657. Note that by this time membership in the senior or administrative class of officials -- that is, officials designated as worthy of posts in the capital and the court (ching-ch'ao kuan) -- no longer denoted actual service in the capital or the court.

³⁶⁸ There were times when an official actually performed the function associated with his titular office. In those case his title was prefaced with such terms as "acting" (ch'uan), "managing" (kou-tang), "supervising" (p'an), and others. See Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," pp. 132-3.

clerks. But up to the Yüan-feng era very few solutions had been offered. Even Wang An-shih showed little interest in administrative reform for its own sake. In order to promote the reforms Wang was perfectly willing to create new agencies such as the Finance Planning Commission, Commission for Reform of the Secretariat, Secretariat Examiners, as well as a host of new intendancies; or to revitalize old T'ang vestiges, such as the Court of Agricultural Supervision and, to administer pao-chia militia training, the Ministry of War. Yet however much these new agencies streamlined the pursuit of reform objectives, their addition to the existing structure just compounded the larger problem of bureaucratic redundancy. Thus Shen-tsung made it his own mission to overhaul Sung government, and to untangle the bureaucratic chaos that in his eyes had become an embarrassment to the memory of the founders.³⁶⁹ Moreover until he was ready to announce his reforms in 1080 he kept his mission private: according to Wang An-shih, who witnessed the Yüan-feng reorganization of government with some alarm from his retirement post in Chiang-ning-fu, whereas Shen-tsung had never before done anything without prior discussion, in this most important matter he proceeded with no consultation at all.³⁷⁰

At the core of his administrative reforms, Shen-tsung aimed to reorganize the Sung central government according to the T'ang Statutes of Government (T'ang liu-tien), whose departments, ministries, courts and directorates provided the hollow shell of the Sung's titular, stipendiary offices. The first stage of the reform, announced in 1080.8, involved the "rectification of office titles" (cheng kuan-ming). This "rectification" involved two steps. First, the functional responsibilities of the entire T'ang roster of offices were revived, except for those with no current applicability, which were abolished outright.³⁷¹ With this change the six ministries, and to a lesser extent the courts and directorates, took over the administrative tasks of the central government, either displacing their counterpart ad hoc organizations completely or reducing them to their original functions. For instance, the financial affairs of the central government, which had been divided between the Finance Commission and since 1070 the Court of Agricultural Supervision, were now centralized in the Ministry of Finance (hu-pu): the Finance Commission was abolished completely, and its financial concerns shifted to the Left Section (tso-ts'ao) of the Finance Ministry; at the same time the Court of Agricultural Supervision was reduced from its powerful role as financial center of the New Policies to its original task as manager of the government's granaries, while its revenue-generating operations were transferred to the Right Section (yu-ts'ao) of the Finance Ministry.³⁷² Similarly the personnel functions of the civil and military

³⁶⁹ HCP, 307, p. 10b.

³⁷⁰ Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu yü-lei, 128, p. 3070, cited in Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," p. 141.

³⁷¹ HCP, 307, p. 10b; HTC, 75, p. 1880.

³⁷² SS, 163, pp. 3846-8; 165, pp. 3904-5; Wang Tseng-yü, "Pei Sung te Ssu-nung-ssu," pp. 30-1.

bureaucracies, which had been scattered among four separate agencies answering to as many oversight boards, were all centralized in the Ministry of Personnel.³⁷³ In the same manner the entire roster of ministries, courts, and directorates were revived as the administrative apparatus of the central government.

The second step in the "rectification of office titles" aimed at creating a new set of titles to designate rank and salary level, now that the old set had been turned into functioning offices. For this purpose Shen-tsung's administrative reform commission (the hsiang-ting kuan-chih so) employed the so-called "prestige" titles (chieh-kuan, san-kuan) in vogue during the T'ang and early Sung. In the ninth month of 1080 the commission submitted a roster of twenty-five new stipendiary titles, organized in a hierarchy of nine major steps (kuan-p'in) and arrayed for the sake of continuity in a one-to-one relationship with the old stipendiary offices. The new roster had two distinct benefits: it was elegant, with all lower titles ending in the suffix lang (gentleman) and all but the two highest titles ending in the suffix ta-fu (grandee); and it was unambiguous, since none of the titles had ever been associated with functional offices.³⁷⁴ The virtues of the reform can be illustrated by the changes in the titles of Fan Ch'un-jen's stipendiary rank: just before the reform Fan held the stipendiary title of Gentleman of the Interior of the Ministry of Justice (shang-shu hsing-pu lang-chung) -- a grade 6B office in the middle of the hierarchy -- with the functional assignment as prefect of Hsin-yang Commandery. When the reform took effect Fan kept his assignment, but acquired the new stipendiary title of ch'ao-san ta-fu, also grade 6B; meanwhile his old stipendiary title had become a functioning post in the Ministry of Justice.³⁷⁵

The Yüan-feng reforms were limited to the central government, and had little impact on the structure of circuit, prefectural, and county administration. Initially the "rectification of office titles" affected only the stipendiary titles of senior civil officials -- that is, officials in the administrative class (ching-ch'ao kuan) -- since at the probationary executory (hsüan-jen) level there was much less discrepancy between titular office and the actual function performed as a staff member of local government. But there were

³⁷³ Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," pp. 136, 138; Lo, An introduction to the civil service, p. 71. Executory class officials were administered by the Bureau of Executory Personnel (liu-nei ch'uan) under the Board of Personnel; administrative class officials were administered by the Bureau of Evaluations (shen-kuan yüan) under the Secretariat-Chancellery; military servitors were administered by the hsuan-hui yüan under the Three Echelons (san-pan yüan); and senior military officers were administered directly by the Bureau of Military Affairs (shu-mi yüan).

³⁷⁴ Lo, An Introduction to the Civil Service, p. 71.

³⁷⁵ Wang An-li, "Fan Ch'un-jen kai-kuan ming-chih," in his Wang Wei-kung chi (in Hu Ssu-ching, comp., Yü-chang ts'ung-shu ed., Nan-ch'ang, ca. 1915-1920), ch. 3. For tables of equivalencies see Miyasaki Ichisada, "So dai kansei josetsu," which introduces Saeki Tomi's So shi shokkanshi sakuin (Kyoto, 1974); or Chung-kuo li-shih ta t'zu-tien: Sung-shih chüan (Shanghai, 1984), pp. 158-60.

some exceptions, and consequently during Hui-tsung's reign new stipendiary titles were adopted for the seven grades of executory officials as well.³⁷⁶ Overall, the first phase of the reforms solved the most vexing problems of the Sung's dual system of classificatory rank and functional office, and helped reduce the number of redundant offices and supernumerary officials -- though according to some contemporaries not as much as abolition of the courts and directorates, which duplicated functions of the six ministries, would have done.³⁷⁷ In this respect, the first phase of the Yüan-feng reorganization did foster Shen-tsung's explicit goal of administrative rationalization. But Shen-tsung also aimed at a second, less explicit, objective, which was to strengthen the authority of the emperor over his ministers.³⁷⁸ One way he chose of maintaining imperial authority was to preserve the Bureau of Military Affairs, despite its overlap with the Ministry of War. The Sung founders had used the Bureau of Military Affairs to maintain imperial control over military matters, by segregating military policy making from the civilian bureaucracy. Despite pressure from many officials to maintain the consistency of the reforms by transferring all military matters to the War Ministry, Shen-tsung refused to abandon the "household regulations" (*chia-fa*) of his dynastic forebears. Consequently only relatively routine matters were routed to the War Ministry, while major policy-making authority -- and seats on the Council of State -- were reserved for the director and vice-director of the Bureau of Military Affairs.³⁷⁹ But if preserving the Bureau constituted a step back from the principle of administrative reform, Shen-tsung also pushed the reforms forward to consolidate his power over the bureaucracy: in the second phase of the Yüan-feng reorganization, in mid-1082, Shen-tsung turned his attention to the top echelon of the bureaucracy, the Three Departments (*san-sheng*).

The three departments of state (*shang-shu sheng*), the chancellery (*men-hsia sheng*), and the secretariat (*chung-shu sheng*) had stood as the collective pinnacle of government since the post-Han period of division. By the eighth century, however, functional distinctions among them had become blurred. This led to the formation of a combined Secretariat-Chancellery (*chung-shu men-hsia*) whose heads normally served as the chief councilors (*tsai-hsiang*), supported by a structure of staff offices (*fang*) that duplicated and supplanted the six ministries of the Department of State Affairs. By the early Sung the Secretariat-Chancellery controlled all civilian affairs except remonstrance,

³⁷⁶ Lo, *An Introduction to the Civil Service*, pp. 72-3. Lo also describes the creation of new titles for military officials during the Yüan-feng period, which "imposed a uniform terminology on the rank systems of both the civil and military officials and brought them under the same personnel agency," thereby reducing the psychological distance between the two services. See p. 73.

³⁷⁷ For the views of Ssu-ma Kuang, Liu An-shih, and Chu Hsi see Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," p. 139.

³⁷⁸ See Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," p. 139.

³⁷⁹ *HCP*, 320, pp. 20a-b; Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," p. 139.

and with the Bureau of Military Affairs comprised the Two Administrations (*liang-fu*) -- civil and military -- of government.³⁸⁰

Intent as he was on running his own government, Shen-tsung saw the Three Departments as a way of breaking up the concentrated power of the Secretariat-Chancellery and its chief ministers, by dividing the single unified civil authority into three separate components. In new administrative protocols announced in the fourth and fifth months of 1082, the Three Departments were revived in a way that diluted their overall authority as much as possible: rather than making each department responsible for a particular set of issues, all three departments were made to share different aspects of every issue: the Secretariat was to consider and deliberate, the Chancellery was to investigate policy alternatives, and the Department of State Affairs -- pinnacle of the Six Ministries -- was to put the final policy decisions into effect. Except in the most unusual circumstances each department was required to perform and memorialize about its own function alone.³⁸¹

Only under the guidance of a superordinate coordinator could such an extreme division of responsibilities function effectively. Under the T'ang Statutes of Government that paramount position would have been filled by the Secretariat-Director (*chung-shu ling*), often the de facto councilor-in-chief (*ch'eng-hsiang*) to the emperor and the man most directly responsible for civil and military governance.³⁸² But it was just this paramount chief official that Shen-tsung wanted to avoid, and in this he was assisted by the wily and ambitious Ts'ai Ch'üeh, still an assisting civil councilor of state under the ineffective Wang Kuei. In Ts'ai Ch'üeh's eyes, the absence of a superordinate minister provided the opportunity he needed to attain supreme power in the bureaucracy. When the new departmental structure was enacted in 1082.4, Wang Kuei's post was changed from Chief Executive of the Secretariat-Chancellery (*t'ung chung-shu men-hsia p'ing-chang-shih*) -- the de facto chief minister -- to Left Co-director of the Department of State Affairs (*shang-shu tso p'u-yeh*); Ts'ai's post was changed from assisting civil councilor (*ts'an-chih cheng-shih*) to Right Co-director (*yu p'u-yeh*) of the Department of State Affairs. Just after the change, it is reported, Ts'ai instructed the credulous Wang Kuei that since under the old system he had been chief minister, then under the new one he should be named Director of the Secretariat. But to Shen-tsung, Ts'ai insisted that no such position was needed: the same level of coordination could be achieved by naming the Left Co-director a concurrent Vice Director (*shih-lang*) of the Chancellery, and the Right Co-director a concurrent Vice Director of the Secretariat. Since this suited Shen-

³⁸⁰ For useful background information see the Introduction and relevant entries in Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles*.

³⁸¹ *HCP*, 325, pp. 9a-b; 326, p. 1a-b; 327, p. 7a-b. See also the "San-sheng tsung-lun," in *Yüan-feng kuan-chih* (1081, photocopy of an edition prefaced in 1175 from the rare book collection of the Taipei Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan).

³⁸² Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles*, item 1616, p. 193; *Ta T'ang liu-tien* (1515; photographic rpt. Taipei, 1974), 9, p. 7a.

tsung's plan to keep political authority divided he agreed. As a result, Ts'ai Ch'üeh came to be known as the "second chief councilor" (tz'u hsiang), although "in reality it was Ts'ai who monopolized the handles of government, while Wang Kuei could only fold his hands in deference."³⁸³

Although Ts'ai Ch'üeh found additional ways to benefit from the new departmental structure -- including having documents routed to his domain in the Secretariat marked "shang," or "submitted up" -- Shen-tsung emphasized his own authority by playing up the subservience of his chief councilors. In sharp contrast to his relationship with Wang An-shih, which was marked by genuine friendship and the respect of a disciple for his mentor, Shen-tsung publicly humiliated Ts'ai and Wang Kuei, by fining them sums of gold for the smallest infractions then obliging them to thank the emperor for their punishment (men-hsieh). Although Ts'ai Ch'üeh was no favorite of officialdom many were embarrassed by this unprecedented imperial discourtesy, which the new censor Huang Lü warned would erode official morale.³⁸⁴

Although the strict division of administrative tasks mandated for the three departments may have enhanced imperial authority, it also prompted an immediate decline in administrative efficiency. Within a month of promulgating the new rules, in 1082.5, Shen-tsung himself complained that government had become paralysed by a dangerous administrative backlog. The emperor seemed on the verge of reviving the old system, in which functionally specialized agencies, such as the Finance Commission and the Court of Agricultural Supervision, reported to a paramount Secretariat. But Ts'ai Ch'üeh, whose power if not his dignity had been significantly enhanced by the reform, convinced Shen-tsung that the new system saved over 20,000 strings of cash monthly in official salaries.³⁸⁵ Nonetheless the strict departmental division of labor proved the least successful aspect of the Yüan-feng administrative reforms: routing every policy initiative through each of the three department, then down to the ministries, and then back up to the departments, was just not conducive to administrative efficiency. Moreover after Shen-tsung's death in 1085 the problems became insuperable. For as Lü Kung-chu pointed out in 1085.7, under Shen-tsung the flaws in the system could be overcome, since he essentially made policy himself and then his chief ministers did what he ordered; but with Shen-tsung's eight-year-old son on the throne there was a critical need for a strong unified council of ministers, working and memorializing on all aspects of policy in concert. As a result of Lü's memorial the three departments and the censorate were given permission to cooperate and to memorialize on policy issues jointly.³⁸⁶ Ssu-ma Kuang

³⁸³ SS, 471, p. 13700; HCP, 325, pp. 9a-b; 327, pp. 7a-b. The remaining civilian councilors were Chang Tun and Chang Tsao as men-hsia and chung-shu shih-langs; P'u Tsung-meng as shang-shu tso-ch'eng; and Wang An-shih's brother An-li as shang-shu yu-ch'eng: See HCP, 325, p. 10b.

³⁸⁴ SS, 471, pp. 13699-700; HCP, 325, p. 10b; 335, pp. 15b-16a.

³⁸⁵ HCP, 326, p. 10a.

³⁸⁶ HCP, 358, pp. 2b-3a.

wanted to go even further, by recombining the Secretariat and the Chancellery as before and giving the chief minister more latitude to decide issues directly.³⁸⁷ Certainly Hui-tsung's chief councilor, Ts'ai Ching, lacked no opportunity to decide matters on his own, but that was because power flows as much from personality as it does from institutions. Institutionally, the three departments were not formally recombined until right after the fall of the Northern Sung, in 1129, nor their chief officers abolished until 1172. Until then, the three departments survived as another redundant layer, a residue of Shen-tsung's attempt to lead the reform movement on his own.

The campaign against the Tangut Hsi Hsia

If Shen-tsung's administrative reforms enjoyed only limited success, his war policy was an unmitigated disaster: the debacle at Yung-le-ch'eng in 1082.9 not only sapped the emperor's faith in his reforms, it also cut short his life at age thirty-seven.

Foreign policy under Wang An-shih

As a young man Shen-tsung was fixated on recovering the northern territories occupied by the Tanguts and the Khitan, and he ascended the throne in 1067 eager to wage offensive wars. In Shen-tsung's m, recovering the northlands was the raison d'être of the New Policies, and so it is ironic that only Wang An-shih, the architect of the New Policies, was able to restrain the emperor's irredentist ambitions. But unlike Fu Pi and Ssu-ma Kuang, who admonished the emperor for even thinking about conquest, Wang An-shih fed the emperor's hopes of "mastering the Hsia state and recovering the old borders of the Han and T'ang" -- but only after essential reforms had been completed.³⁸⁸ For as Wang demonstrated in a court debate of 1071, he was keenly aware of the power of Sung's northern neighbors, and of the folly of engaging them prematurely:

There are projects that we should pursue but for which our power is still inadequate. For example quelling the barbarians and opening up the frontier, however desirable they seem at the moment, are still beyond our capacity. His majesty must deeply consider that our financial resources are inadequate and reliable men of talent rare. For the moment, therefore, we should concentrate on quieting down border affairs. If we can quiet things down on the border so that the barbarians cannot harm us then we can put our internal affairs in order; once our internal affairs are in order, there is an adequate supply of talented men, and

³⁸⁷ SMWC, 57, pp. 685-7, "Ch'i he liang-sheng wei-i cha-tzu," quoted in Kung Yen-ming, "Pei Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih," p. 138.

³⁸⁸ HCP, 230, p. 5605. On Wang An-shih's cautious approach to war see James Liu, Reform in Sung China, p. 57, and Tao Jing-shen, Two sons of heaven: studies in Sung-Liao relations (Tucson, 1988), p. 68.

we are prosperous and strong (fu-ch'iang), then there will be nothing that we cannot do.³⁸⁹

Of the two northern states Wang felt the Sung had more to fear from the Liao, which he described as the vastest, most populous barbarian nation in many generations; and he warned Shen-tsung that if he did not first devote himself to "establishing order throughout society," then there could be no hope of encompassing and controlling the Khitan.³⁹⁰ Wang put this prudent view to effect in a series of border issues that embroiled the two empires between 1072 and 1076, when he consistently sought to preserve peace, even where peace meant adopting a compliant attitude towards the Liao.³⁹¹

It sometimes seemed that Wang took a much more defiant attitude towards the Tangut Hsi Hsia, who because of the accession of a child ruler (Ping Ch'ang, reign 1067-1086) and their political disarray could appear relatively vulnerable.³⁹² But in practice Wang preached a cautious approach to the Tanguts as well. Wang's real views were revealed in 1070, after Sung incursions into Tangut territory had provoked retaliatory attacks in Ching-yüan Circuit: "What if we show a strong front to the [Tanguts] and they decline to obey; how will the court then deal with them? We are not now strong enough to match troops (chiao-ping) with them; and if we do not match troops, then what else can we do? It would be most inappropriate if we first put up a show of strength and are then forced to humble ourselves. Under the current circumstances, we should make a point of being accommodating (jou) towards [the Hsia]; by being accommodating we are least likely to miscalculate."³⁹³

Map 15

What then did Wang offer an emperor whose motivating ambition was to recover the lost territories of the north? In brief, he offered Shen-tsung a policy of expansion, colonization, and economic exploitation in the frontier regions of Hunan, Szechwan, and

³⁸⁹ HCP, 221, p. 5371

³⁹⁰ HCP, 236, pp. 5725-6

³⁹¹ See Tao Jing-shen, Two sons of heaven, pp.72-8. The principal issues were the border incursion of 1072, the Khitan establishment of observation posts in Sung territory in 1073, and Sung fortification of the border and renegotiation of the Sung-Liao boundary between 1074 and 1075, an issue in which Wang was less inclined to be submissive. Although traditional historiography charges Wang with the abandonment of land to the Liao in the final settlement of 1076, Tao Jing-shen argues that he probably played little role in the final decision.

³⁹² HCP, 236, p. 5752.

³⁹³ HCP, 214, p. 5197.

the Tibetan tribal lands of Ch'ing-hai and Kansu.³⁹⁴ This long border between the Sung and the tribes of the forest, mountains, and steppe contained abundant natural resources, including war horses, and hosted a wide range of lucrative foreign trades that could be exploited for the eventual campaign against the Tanguts. The prototype for Wang An-shih's policy of conquest along the weak frontier was created by the frontier adventurer Wang Shao. In 1068 Wang Shao sent up a proposal to colonize the Tibetan tribal lands between Hsi-ning (in modern Ch'ing-hai province) and the T'ao River valley (in southwestern Kansu), then highly unstable and vulnerable to Tangut annexation, and to finance the conquest with a state monopoly over the region's substantial foreign trade. Wang Shao offered his policy as the first step in creating a Sino-Tibetan alliance that would surround the Tanguts from front to rear, and put the Hsia state "in the palm of [Sung] hands."³⁹⁵ As an expression of his commitment to employing any man who could get things done the emperor immediately charged Wang Shao with putting his proposal into action. With the fervent support of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih, Wang Shao's Tibetan campaign bore fruit with the establishment of the new Sung military circuit of Hsi-ho lu in 1072 and the defeat of the Tibetan leader Mu-cheng in 1074.³⁹⁶

Map 16

Whenever the policy of expansion in the weak frontiers provoked nervous counter-measures by the Tanguts and the Khitan, Wang An-shih acted to restrain his

³⁹⁴ For overviews and sources on Wang An-shih's policies in the northwestern and southwestern frontiers see Smith, Taxing heaven's storehouse, pp. 41-7; Richard von Glahn, The country of streams and grottoes: expansion, settlement, and the civilizing of the Sichuan frontier in Song times (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), pp. 98-104; and (on Hunan) Richard von Glahn, "The country of streams and grottoes: geography, settlement, and the civilizing of China's southwestern frontier, 1000-1250" (diss., Yale University, 1983).

³⁹⁵ For Wang Shao's "Three Part Proposal For Pacifying the Western Barbarians" see SS, 328, p. 10579, translated by Williamson, Wang An Shih, Vol. 1, pp. 305-6. The fullest study of Wang Shao's frontier policy is Enoki Kazuo, "O Sei no Kasei keiryaku ni tsuite," Mo-ko gakuho 1 (1940), pp. 87-168. For its continuation under Che-tsung and Hui-tsung see "Paul Jakob Smith, "Frontier Expansion, Political Capital, and the Suppression of Policy Debate: the Annexation of Hehuang (Northeastern Amdo) under Shenzong and His Sons, 1068 - 1108," in Patricia Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, eds. Huizong and the Culture of Northern Song China (forthcoming).

³⁹⁶ Two constituent prefectures of Hsi-ho Circuit, Ho-chou and Min-chou, were not taken until 1073, in battles that brought down on Wang Shao the charge of genocide against Tibetan tribals. Wang's chief Tibetan adversary, Mu-cheng, did not submit until 1074. See HCP, 239, p. 5818; 243, pp. 5912-16, 5945-56; 252, p. 6160. On Wang Shao's retirement in 1077, after his relations with Wang An-shih had soured over the war with Annam, Wang Shao claimed that because of the cost he had never wanted to create a separate circuit of Hsi-ho, but that Wang An-shih had insisted. See HCP, 280, p. 6865.

more bellicose emperor from responding impetuously. Wang's only serious strategic miscalculation involved the Annamese state of Chiao-chih, in modern Vietnam. In late 1075, Annamese troops attacked walled towns across the border in Kuang-nan West, searching for rebels harbored by the Chinese. In addition, the Annamese claimed they were on a mission of mercy, "to save the people from the green sprouts and service exemption policies of the Middle Kingdom." Taking this as a personal affront, Wang An-shih persuaded the emperor to launch a punitive expedition, for which he personally wrote the proclamation.³⁹⁷ But from the beginning the expedition went badly: in 1076.1 the Annamese launched an attack on Yung-chou, the site of Nung Chih-kao's uprising twenty-five years earlier; and despite Wang's insistence that the city would hold, the Annamese troops overcame stiff resistance to breach the city's walls and slaughter thousands of functionaries, troops, and residents.³⁹⁸ Ten months later, with Wang now out of office, the court retaliated by sending one-hundred thousand soldiers and twice as many labor conscripts deep into Annamese territory. eed this force was massive enough to frighten the Annamese leader into suing for peace, but the victory was a costly one; for in the tropical climate of the south over half the Sung troops and porters died from the heat and "swamp fever" (*she-chang*).³⁹⁹

Shen-tsung's Tangut wars

The Annam campaign further exacerbated the political turmoil of Wang An-shih's second term as chief minister, driving a wedge between him and Wang Shao and further alienating the emperor.⁴⁰⁰ But if conservatives thought that Wang's departure would bring an end to frontier expansion and war mobilization they were deeply disappointed. With no one left to speak to Shen-tsung as an equal, the emperor was finally free to pursue the linchpin of his plan to recover the northern territories, the conquest of the Tangut Hsi Hsia.

Shen-tsung had to know that the conquest would be difficult, for the Tanguts had already demonstrated how formidable they were at the beginning of his reign. In 1067 the Sung general Ch'ung O captured the Tangut town of Sui-chou, a strategic key to the

³⁹⁷ HCP, 271, pp. 6650-1; 273, pp. 6674-5. On the Sino-Vietnamese war see James A. Anderson, "Treacherous factions: Shifting frontier alliances in the breakdown of Sino-Vietnamese relations on the eve of the 1075 border war," in Battlefronts real and imagined: War, border, and identity in the Chinese middle period, ed. Donald J. Wyatt (New York, forthcoming), pp. XX -- YY; and The rebel den of Nùng Trí Cao, chapter 4. Anderson argues that the Vietnamese Lý court was prompted to invade the Chinese side of the frontier out of fears that Sung authorities were overly successful in cultivating relations with the upland followers of Nung Chih-kao and his clan.

³⁹⁸ HCP, 272, pp. 6664-5.

³⁹⁹ HCP, 279, pp. 6843-4.

⁴⁰⁰ HCP, 273, p. 6684; 280, p. 2865.

river valleys leading southeast to the Yellow River and the Sung heartland.⁴⁰¹ When a deal to exchange Sui-chou for Sung stockades held by the Tanguts fell through in 1069 the Sung court tightened its hold by walling the old town and renaming it Sui-te Commandery (Sui-te-chün). The Tanguts responded in 1070.5 by throwing "one-hundred thousand" troops southwest of the contested zone into Shan-hsi's Huan-ch'ing military circuit, in a probe that exposed the incompetence of the Sung generals and the lack of discipline among their troops, who slaughtered hundreds of Tibetan residents of the area long after the Tangut troops had withdrawn.⁴⁰² Tangut forces took one Huan-ch'ing stockade after another, at the same time diverting twenty-thousand men against Sui-te, but even at this point the hostilities could have been stepped down, as Wang An-shih recommended. Arguing that the Tanguts were just trying to provoke the Sung into wasting men and provisions, Wang urged Shen-tsung to let the Tanguts keep the small stockades and not to make a show of massive retaliation before Sung troops were ready. But Shen-tsung was not yet ready to abandon the prospect of an offensive campaign, and in 1070.9 he despatched state councilor Han Chiang to Shan-hsi to oversee war preparations.⁴⁰³

In a campaign that served as a dress rehearsal for the Yung-le debacle of 1082, Han proposed mixing a defense based on "strengthening the walls and clearing out the countryside" (chien-pi ch'ing yeh) with an offensive tactic of political and military provocations that would incite the Tanguts into overcommitting themselves.⁴⁰⁴ The cornerstone of Han's plan was to build a line of stockades along the border from Hengshan to the Yellow River, despite the warnings of court officials and field commanders that the arid, grassless wasteland would be difficult to provision and impossible to defend.⁴⁰⁵ In the last month of 1070 Han armed Ch'ung O with twenty-thousand troops and a license to behead uncooperative commanders, and ordered him to wall Luo-wu-ch'eng just south of the Tangut outpost of Yü-lin. In the next month Ch'ung O secured the area and threw up walls around Luo-wu, using wood from buildings and watchtowers further south that he had dismantled and carried in. Before he could move on to the next site, however, logistical problems began to intrude: Luo-wu had no wells, the 50-mile provisioning road was defensible, conscription of Chinese and Tibetan men left only women available to carry grain, and the enormous provisioning needs of the campaign

⁴⁰¹ For descriptions of the border terrain see Forage, "Science, technology, and war," p. 71; and Li Hua-jui, Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih, pp. 158-63.

⁴⁰² HCP, 214, pp. 5203-5; SS, 486, pp. 14007-8.

⁴⁰³ HCP, 214, pp. 5195-7, 5203-5; 215, pp. 5236-7. The emperor had wanted to send Wang, who had no military expertise at all, but Han Chiang requested the assignment for himself.

⁴⁰⁴ HCP, 215, pp. 5241-2. The Sung court cut off yearly payments to the Hsi Hsia, and closed down the mutual trade (ho-shih) markets.

⁴⁰⁵ HCP, 217, p. 5273; 219, p. 5324.

had begun to suck up the scarce resources of a 20-prefecture regional economy that was already exhausted by drought. On top of the logistical problems, the command structure had been short-circuited by Han Chiang and Ch'ung O, leaving field generals in complete confusion.⁴⁰⁶ In the second month of 1071 Tangut troops moved in to take advantage of the misconceived campaign, meeting no significant opposition. Once the first stockade fell the Sung court ordered Luo-wu-ch'eng abandoned, while Ch'ung O "panicked so badly that he could not even hold a brush" to write for help. Moreover the confusion spread into neighboring Ch'ing-chou, where a former Tangut slave whom Han Chiang had promoted to commander led a mutiny of some two-thousand men, humiliating Han and further exposing the disorder within the Sung armies.⁴⁰⁷

The Luo-wu-ch'eng fiasco, for which Han Chiang was cashiered, ended Shen-tsung's first attempt to conquer the Hsi Hsia. Although the Tanguts did not recover Suite, the campaign and related military activities cost the Sung over seven million strings of cash, and further destabilized a north Chinese population already buffeted by drought and famine.⁴⁰⁸ The debacle also underscored the need for fundamental reforms before Shen-tsung could realize his irredentist ambition. In addition to militarization of the pao-chia system, reform leaders enacted other significant military reforms. In mid-1072, the court reestablished a national military institute to improve the training of Sung military leaders, for whom Wang An-shih had little respect.⁴⁰⁹ Wang An-shih also tried to alleviate the odium of military service, which he saw as a cause of unrest and potential rebelliousness, by abolishing the practice of branding soldiers and reducing the punishments for desertion.⁴¹⁰ And in an effort to improve troop training and cooperation, the court introduced the "combined battallion" and "cohesive squad" measures (chiang-ping, chieh-tui fa).⁴¹¹ On other fronts, reformers crafted a reliable

⁴⁰⁶ HCP, 218, pp. 5305-6; 218, pp. 5312-15; 220, pp. 5337-8, 5343-6.

⁴⁰⁷ SS, 486, p. 14009; HCP, 220, pp. 5361-2.

⁴⁰⁸ For Ssu-ma Kuang's "Admonition against the western campaign" ("Chien Hsi-cheng shu") see SMWC, 45, pp. 569-71, quoted in HCP, 218, pp. 5312-15.

⁴⁰⁹ HCP, 234, pp. 5689-91. For examples of Wang's contempt for the Sung general staff see HCP, 232, pp. 5631-2; 234, p. 5675.

⁴¹⁰ HCP, 223, p. 5420; 235, pp. 5704-5. See also Teng Kuang-ming, "Wang An-shih tui pei-Sung ping-chih te kai-ko ts'o-shih chi ch'i she-hsiang," in Teng Kuang-ming and Ch'eng Ying-liu, eds., Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi (Shanghai, 1982), pp. 318-20.

⁴¹¹ The two measures which sought to regularize training and institute greater troop solidarity by combining imperial troops (and in frontier regions Tibetan soldiers and "archers") from different commands (chih-hui) into mixed battallions (chiang) of several thousand to ten thousand men, subdivided into companies (pu) and squads (tui) under a hierarchy of officers charged with upgrading overall training. See Wang Tseng-yü, Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an, pp. 107-14; Ch'i Hsia, Wang An-shih pien-fa, pp. 283-5; and,

horse-supply system to help offset the Tangut and Liao advantage in cavalry mounts. Starting in 1074, administrators of the Szechwan -- Shan-hsi Tea and Horse Agency took advantage of Wang Shao's extension of the northwest frontier to create a marketing system that regularly traded Szechwanese tea for over ten thousand Tibetan cavalry horses annually for the remainder of the Northern Sung.⁴¹² At about the same time Wang An-shih and his followers dismantled the expensive attempt to maintain a national herd in government pastures radiating out from K'ai-feng, and instead stabled a small number of horses throughout the North Chinese population through the pao-ma (pao-chia horse), hu-ma (household horse) and chi-t'ien mu-ma (land in return for a horse) measures.⁴¹³ In addition, Wang P'ang and Lü Hui-ch'ing established the Directorate of Armaments in 1073, in order to extend China's overall advantage in military technology.⁴¹⁴ And of course throughout the 1070s the reformers built up Shen-tsung's war-chest with surplus cash and grain generated by the green sprouts and service exemption funds, as well as more local measures like the Szechwan tea monopoly.

As the military reforms took shape and the funds poured in, only Wang An-shih stood between Shen-tsung and a new expedition against the Hsi Hsia. When in 1074 the emperor demanded know why now was not the time to attack the Tanguts, Wang urged him to let Wang Shao complete his pacification of the Tibetans, lest the Tanguts take advantage of the Sung's preoccupation to combine forces with the Khitan.⁴¹⁵ Once Wang was out of office, however, Shen-tsung was surrounded by ineffective men like Wu Ch'ung, too weak to restrain the emperor, or by opportunists like Ts'ai Ch'üeh, willing to say anything the emperor wanted to hear. And all the emperor did want to hear, lamented Chang Fang-p'ing in 1077, was talk of war.⁴¹⁶ Ambitious men in and out of government knew that the best way to advance their careers was to promote Shen-tsung's war goals. Thus Ts'ai Ch'üeh goaded Wang Kuei into supporting the Tangut expedition,

for an overall survey of Shen-tsung's military reforms, Feng Tung-li and Mao Yüan-yu, Pei-Sung/Liao/Hsia chün-shih shih, pp. 277-312.

⁴¹² Smith, Taxing heaven's storehouse, pp. 264-5.

⁴¹³ See Sogabe Shizuo, "So-dai no basei," in his So-dai keizaishi no kenkyu, pp. 77-91; SS, 198, pp. 4946-50; WHTK, 160, pp. 1391-2; CPPM, 75, pp. 2381-93, 109, pp. 3443-54. The numbers involved were relatively insignificant: pao-ma operated under a quota of 8,000 head; hu-ma distributed 11,662 head by 1080, but stopped replacing animals after 1084; and chi-ti mu-ma placed a total of 23,500 horses under the care of 87,000 households by 1124.

⁴¹⁴ HCP, 245, pp. 5972-4. Paul Forage discusses the relationship between Shen-tsung's expansionism and military technology in "Science, Technology, and War."

⁴¹⁵ HCP, 250, pp. 6103-4.

⁴¹⁶ HCP, 286, pp. 7005-9. Li T'ao attributes this memorial, which ranks bellicosity as destructive as an addiction to sex, to Su Shih.

in order to put the out-of-favor chief minister in Ts'ai's debt by saving his position; while Shen K'uo circumvented Ts'ai Ch'üeh's efforts to keep him out of government by presenting the emperor with an actual expedition plan.⁴¹⁷

Meanwhile, as officials fed the emperor's irredentist yearnings, Shen-tsung made his own preparations for war. In 1077.11, the Directorate of Armaments announced that weapons had been stockpiled in the five circuits of north China.⁴¹⁸ A year later Shen-tsung renamed the thirty-three treasuries that had grown out of T'ai-tsu's original war chest, and commemorated them with a poem:

In succession the Five Dynasties lost their bearings, while the northern dogs flourished. T'ai-tsu founded our nation, and with the aim of disciplining the barbarians he established an inner storehouse to pay for raising troops. [This dream] his descendant must honor; could I dare forget his ambition?⁴¹⁹

Now all Shen-tsung needed was an appropriate opportunity to launch his new campaign.

The collapse of the Yüan-feng invasion

That opportunity was provided by the Hsia Empress Dowager Liang, who in early 1081 imprisoned her son Ping-ch'ang, the Emperor Hui-tsung, for drifting ritually and diplomatically towards the Sung.⁴²⁰ The coup was reported to Shen-tsung by none other than Ch'ung O, who had survived the Luo-wu-ch'eng embarrassment to become Commandant of Fu-yen military circuit. Ch'ung O recommended launching a "punitive expedition" against the Tanguts in Ling-chou and their capital of Hsing-chou, in order to restore the rightful ruler. Ch'ung was ordered to draw up a battle plan with Shen K'uo, then serving as Fu-yen Military Commissioner (ching-lüeh an-fu-shih), and after Ch'ung boasted that he would conquer the leaderless Hsia nation and bring the child Ping-ch'ang back to K'ai-feng Shen-tsung could be restrained no longer: in the sixth month of 1081, all circuits of Shan-hsi were ordered to prepare for the arrival of expeditionary forces.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ HCP, 291, pp. 7115-16; 313, pp. 11a-b. On the connections between Ts'ai Ch'üeh, Shen K'uo, and the Yüan-feng expedition see Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," pp. 56-8.

⁴¹⁸ HCP, 285, p. 6989.

⁴¹⁹ HCP, 295, pp. 13b-14a. Williamson also translates the poem, following Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, in Wang An Shih Vol. 2, p.160.

⁴²⁰ HCP, 312, p. 71b. Ping-ch'ang replaced Tangut with Chinese ceremony, and allegedly planned to turn over the southern Ordos to the Sung. See Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia."

⁴²¹ HCP, 313, pp. 11a-b; Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," p. 59.

Map 17

The battle plan called for a five-pronged attack on the Tangut capital, led largely by men who had served in Wang Shao's Hsi-ho campaign: in addition to Ch'ung O, the commanders included the eunuch generals Li Hsien, Wang Chung-cheng, and Liu Ch'ang-tso, and Shen-tsung's maternal uncle, Kao Tsun-yü. These five men commanded combat troops of about 370,000 men, supported by about the same number of transport troops, arrayed to converge on the Tangut capital from the south, southeast, and southwest.⁴²²

The logistical demands of the expedition were enormous, requiring the tactical expertise of individual commanders, smooth communication among all the commanders, and the rapid coordination of forces and provisions across the vast, inhospitable terrain bounded by the southern half of the Yellow River loop. Coming on the tenth anniversary of Ch'ung O's Luo-wu-ch'eng disaster, which had failed on just these same criteria, the Yüan-feng expedition would test how much the offensive capacity of the Sung armies had improved over ten years of reform.

The campaign was launched in the eighth month of 1081, and at first enjoyed quite stunning success. The next month Li Hsien's troops took Lan-chou, which had been in Tibetan or Tangut control for four centuries, giving him access to the Yellow River routes up to the Tangut capital.⁴²³ Ch'ung O, heading in from the western side of the loop, took Mi-chih, Shih-chou, and Hsia-chou in 1081.10, thus gaining control of the Heng-shan highlands where he had fared so poorly a decade earlier.⁴²⁴ At the same time Kao Tsun-yü and Liu Ch'ang-tso, leading armies from Huan-ch'ing and Ching-yüan, fought their way north towards Ling-chou.⁴²⁵

The Tangut court was caught off guard by the initial Sung victories, which had cost thousands of Tangut lives. Desperate for a strategy to save the capital, the Empress Dowager Liang rejected the plea of her younger generals to confront the Sung forces directly in favor of a plan to "strengthen the walls and clear the fields" advocated by one of her older generals: concentrate our forces around Ling-chou in the west and Hsia-chou in the east, let the Sung armies penetrate deeply into our territory, then attack their supply

⁴²² For a discussion of troop strength and the ratio of combat to transport troops see Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," pp. 59-60 and 65-6.

⁴²³ HCP, 316, pp. 1b, 4b-5a. The battles are summarized in SS, 486, pp. 14010-11, and analysed in Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," pp. 61-73; and Li Hua-jui, Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih, 180-93.

⁴²⁴ Ch'ung O was joined in Hsia-chou by Wang Chung-cheng. HCP, 316, pp. 14b-15a; 317, p. 12b; 318, pp. 3a-b.

⁴²⁵ HCP, 319, pp. 1a-2a.

lines with light cavalry to cut off their provisions.⁴²⁶ Whether or not this account of the Tangut war council is apocryphal, it accurately summarizes the fate of the Sung invasion. Supply problems soon beset Kao Tsun-yü and Liu Ch'ang-tso at one end of the campaign in Ling-chou, and Ch'ung O and Wang Chung-cheng at the other end in the Heng-shan highlands, sowing discord among the generals and between them and their civilian supply masters. In the east, shortages kept Ch'ung O from advancing from Hsia-chou to Ling-chou, and precipitated the grizzly slaughter of hundreds of labor conscripts at the hands of the Fu-yen Circuit Fiscal Intendant Li Chi, who personally joined his troops in slicing through the foot-tendons of fleeing porters and left them to crawl helplessly to their deaths.⁴²⁷ At the same time, two other Fu-yen fiscal officials had sold off provisions intended for Wang Chung-cheng and his troops in Yu-chou, compounding Wang's sense of dread at the eerie emptiness of an area completely abandoned by the Tanguts. Because of his fear that lurking Tangut soldiers would spy on his encampment Wang forbade his soldiers from lighting fires, forcing the men to eat their dwelling supply of rice uncooked. Already weakened by exhaustion and exposure to the cold, many of the soldiers got sick from the dirty, raw rice, provoking angry calls to murder their commander and the two fiscal officials. Wang Chung-cheng barely escaped with his life before his troops were ordered to retreat back to Yen-chou, losing twenty-thousand soldiers to starvation and Tangut harassment.⁴²⁸

In Ling-chou, supply problems were exacerbated by poor communications and sheer incompetence: neither Kao Tsun-yü nor Liu Ch'ang-tso were able to coordinate their arrival at Ling-chou, and when Kao did begin to attack in 1081.11 he discovered that his troops had brought no siege equipment. After eighteen days of their ineffective siege, punctuated by squabbles between Kao and Liu and threats of mutiny from the troops, the Tanguts cut the irrigation canals that watered the city and inundated the Sung camps. The Sung forces were ordered by the court to withdraw, but Tangut harassment turned their retreat into a rout.⁴²⁹

In four short months the Tangut invasion, for Shen-tsung the capstone of the New Policies, had gone from stunning success to humiliating defeat. But despite the rout the northern armies were still geared up for war, and in the spring of 1082 many officials called on the emperor to continue his campaign. In 1082.4 Li Hsien, whose capture of Lan-chou was one of the few successes of the expedition, advocated a new expedition against the Tangut capital; when Lü Kung-chu resolutely opposed repeating the earlier mistake an irritated Shen-tsung let him resign as co-director of the Bureau of Military

⁴²⁶ SS, 486, p. 14011. Forage suggests that the event is a "post facto historical reconstruction." See p. 65, n. 74.

⁴²⁷ HCP, 319, pp. 3b-4a. Li Chi was seconded from the Szechwan Tea and Horse Exchange, where he had been Superintendent.

⁴²⁸ HCP, 319, pp. 2a-3b, 6a-b. Half of the civilian transport conscripts fled.

⁴²⁹ HCP, 320, pp. 2a-b; Forage, "Science, Technology, and War," p. 69.

Affairs.⁴³⁰ The next month Shen K'uo and Ch'ung O recommended an alternative plan to wall Wu-yen-ch'eng, on the headwaters of the Wu-ting River, in order to control the strategic resources of the Heng-shan highlands (salt, iron, pastures, and war-loving locals) and gain access to the southern Ordos. It was this more limited proposal that Shen-tsung endorsed. But rather than delegating it to Shen K'uo and Ch'ung O, who at least knew the terrain, he placed it in the hands of Hsü Hsi, a cunning political manipulator who had won the emperor's favor by denouncing Sung generals as too cowardly to conquer the Tanguts.⁴³¹ Hsü Hsi reached Yen-an-fu and the campaign staging ground in 1082.8, and immediately revised the original proposal. Instead of focusing on Wu-yen and the arc of sites north of Heng-shan, which he rejected as too close to the prefectures that Ch'ung O had lost the previous fall, Hsü Hsi proposed to wall Yung-le to the south of Heng-shan, which overlooked the Wu-ting River valley leading southeast to Sui-te. But Yung-le was just across stream from Luo-wu, the site of Ch'ung O's first disaster, and Ch'ung O forcefully opposed Hsü Hsi's choice with the same argument he himself had ignored in 1071: Yung-le had no ependent water supply, it was efeasible, and walling it could only lead to carnage. Hsü Hsi remained obdurate, however, and after ordering Ch'ung O to return to Yen-chou he himself undertook the walling of Yung-le, which Shen-tsung elevated with the title of "Yin-ch'uan Fortress."⁴³²

Official opinion held that because of Yung-le's strategic importance the Tanguts would have to contest it, but Hsü Hsi welcomed their arrival, proclaiming that it would be his moment of glory. When in the ninth month of 1082 the Tanguts actually converged, however, Hsü Hsi's braggadocio turned to horror: for as he looked out over his new walls to the west, there stood 300,000 Tangut troops stretched out as far as the eye could see. And now the fates of his 35,000 troops were sealed, for Hsü Hsi's stubbornness was compounded by incompetence. Twice he refused to heed his generals when they begged him to attack before the Tanguts, with their awesome armored cavalry called the Iron Hawks (t'ie-yao), could get into formation; and twice he refused to let his troops retreat before the Tangut onslaught, one time even forcing them to stand outside the gates and take the Tangut attack head on. Half of the troops who made it back inside the walls died of thirst, as Tangut control of the water supply forced parched soldiers to drink what liquids they could wring out of horse manure. When heavy rains did fall it was too late for the exhausted troops, who were cut down or fled as the Tanguts swarmed the walls. Li Chi and Hsü Hsi's eunuch lieutenant Li Shun-chü were killed by the panicking soldiers, as was Hsü Hsi himself thought to be, although some reported sighting him alive.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ HCP, 225, p. 131b. For court discussion of the plan see HCP, 327, pp. 4b-7a.

⁴³¹ HCP, 330, pp. 9a-b.

⁴³² CPPM, 89, pp. 2757-9; SS, 486, p. 14011. The HCP, entries on Hsü Hsi's campaign are anthologized in CPPM, 89, pp. 2757-67. General Kao Yung-heng also criticised the project, for which he was despatched to Yen-chou and placed under arrest. See HTC 77, p. 1929.

⁴³³ HCP, 329, pp. 19a-21a; SS, 486, p. 14012

The Yung-le tragedy brought an end to Shen-tsung's irredentist ambitions. From a military perspective, the costs had already been too high: in return for Lan-chou and six Tangut border towns, the Sung lost 230 officers and 12,300 troops at Yung-le, and an estimated 600,000 officers, Chinese and Tibetan regulars, and militia for the Ling-chou and Yung-le campaigns combined.⁴³⁴ Emotionally, the debacle broke Shen-tsung's spirit. After receiving the report of Yung-le's fall in 1082.10 he appeared in tears before his state councilors, berating them for not giving him better advice. "Not a single one of you said that the Yung-le campaign was wrong," the emperor charged, casting about for a scapegoat. It is true that ever since Wang An-shih's departure officials had tried to advance their own careers by urging the emperor on to war, even after the Ling-chou rout had "caused all under heaven to yearn for the court to bring an end to war." Yet by the emperor's own admission there were men who had counselled against war, including state councilors Lü Kung-chu and Wang An-li -- who had also warned that Hsü Hsi would destroy the nation -- and the field commander Chao Hsieh. Shen-tsung had simply chosen not to listen. It was only the failure of the Yüan-feng invasions that forced Shen-tsung to confront the limitations of his armies: after Kao Tsun-yü was routed at Ling-chou and Hsü Hsi was overwhelmed by a Tangut army whose strength he had completely underestimated, "the emperor began to realize that his frontier officials could not be trusted; moreover he had become weary of war, and had no more ambition to conquer the Western (Hsia)."⁴³⁵

After a decade of military reform the Sung army was no more able to project power out into the desert and the steppe than before. Of course, the Tanguts had also suffered devastating losses, and could no longer be regarded as an offensive threat. But in the eyes of such Yüan-yü critics as Su Shih, Su Ch'e and Ssu-ma Kuang they never had been an offensive threat; it was the Sung that constituted the threat, driven on by "ambitious and provocative ministers" who started the wars for territory and personal glory.⁴³⁶ In the aftermath of the fall of Yung-le hostilities continued to simmer, as the Tanguts sought to regain Lan-chou and their six border towns. Neither side had the strength for an extended offensive campaign, however, and a stalemate persisted between the two countries until Che-tsung's majority in 1094, when (as described in the next chapter) Chang Tun, Ts'ai Ching, and T'ung Kuan gradually returned to a more aggressive strategy.

SHEN-TSUNG'S DEATH AND THE OUSTER OF THE REFORMERS

⁴³⁴ HCP, 330, p. 1a; SS, 486, p. 14012. Although the figure of 600,000 is undoubtedly exaggerated, it suggests how stunning the actual losses must have been.

⁴³⁵ HCP, 330, pp. 1a, 9a-10a.

⁴³⁶ For representative memorials see HCP, 380, pp. 1b-3a (Ssu-ma Kuang); 381, pp. 26b-30a (Su Ch'e); and 405, pp. 2a-5a and 11a-13a (Su Shih); cited by Wu T'ien-ch'ih, Hsi Hsia shih-kao, pp. 84-5.

The collapse of his Tangut expedition sapped Shen-tsung's reforming zeal, and pushed him increasingly towards the "old-party" (chiu-tang) men. In fact, Shen-tsung had planned to use the second stage of his administrative reforms, the reestablishment of the Tang table of offices in 1082, as a vehicle for mixing conservatives in with the "new" men. He had hoped to start by appointing Ssu-ma Kuang to the resuscitated position of Censor-in-Chief (yü-shih ta-fu), unfilled for at least three reigns, but bowed to the objections of Ts'ai Ch'üeh and Wang Kuei.⁴³⁷ After Yung-le, however, Shen-tsung was much less tolerant of what he saw as the reformers' obsession with keeping Ssu-ma Kuang out of court, and in 1083.8 he gave vent to his frustration by cashiering state councilor P'u Tseng-meng for railing against Ssu-ma Kuang's "perverted views."⁴³⁸ Soon after, the emperor began to bring Ssu-ma Kuang's associates back into the government. In the first month of 1084 Shen-tsung ordered that Su Shih be allowed to move to the lively Yangtze Delta city of Ch'ang-chou from the backwater river-town of Huang-chou (Huai-nan W.) where Wang Kuei had banished him under "administrative restraint" (an-chih) for writing an allegedly seditious poem.⁴³⁹ Four months later the emperor also revived the career of the prominent New Policies opponent Fan Ch'un-jen, blocked like Ssu-ma Kuang from a new office under the Yüan-feng administrative reforms; Shen-tsung appointed Fan prefect of Shan-hsi's Ho-chung-fu, the critical transport center at the intersection of the Wei and Yellow Rivers, where he immediately began detailing the disruptions caused by pao-chia mobilization.⁴⁴⁰

By the autumn of 1084 Shen-tsung turned with even greater urgency to the old-party men, for though only thirty-six years old he was ill and sensed he was dying. It was time, the emperor announced to his ministers, to designate an heir, whose training and protection he would entrust to Ssu-ma and Lü Kung-chu. To Ts'ai Ch'üeh, always good at reading the emperor's m, it was clear that Ssu-ma Kuang could no longer be kept from court; so rather than squandering his influence trying to oppose Ssu-ma Kuang, Ts'ai sought instead to ingratiate himself with him.⁴⁴¹ This he could not do directly, for Ssu-ma would be unlikely to deal directly with a man like Ts'ai Ch'üeh; an intermediary was needed. For this purpose Ts'ai chose Hsing Shu, in the 1060s a disciple of Ch'eng Hao, Lü Kung-chu, and Ssu-ma Kuang himself. Hsing Shu had also attracted the attention of Wang An-shih, who tried to mould him into a New Policies partisan. When factional

⁴³⁷ HCP, 350, pp. 8a-10a. On the censor-in-chief see Kracke, Civil Service, p.36.

⁴³⁸ HCP, 338, pp. 10b-11a.

⁴³⁹ HCP, 342, pp. 8b-9b. Wang Kuei had succeeded in enforcing the banishment despite Shen-tsung's protestations against over-interpreting poetry, suggesting that one key element of imperial power was simply how committed the emperor was to exercising his will.

⁴⁴⁰ HCP, 345, pp. 15b-16a.

⁴⁴¹ HCP, 350, pp. 8a-10a.

lines began to form Hsing Shu chose the conservative side, deprecating the reforms to Wang An-shih and his son, but Hsing paid a heavy price for his principled stand, spending most of the Hsi-ning years wandering around Lo-yang with no employment. Wu Ch'ung brought him back to court in an academic position, which he valued all the more because of his years out of office. Ts'ai Ch'üeh's purge of Wu Ch'ung's men filled Hsing Shu with dread, but he was saved from expulsion by the emperor's favorable notice. But Ts'ai must have sensed that Hsing Shu had become accustomed to office, and hence easy to suborn. As soon as he approached Hsing Shu in late 1084, Hsing offered to put his connections with the conservative luminaries to Ts'ai's service, transmitting a message from Ts'ai Ch'üeh to Ssu-ma Kuang's son K'ang urging K'ang to encourage his father accept an academic post at court -- an act of fawning servility that Ssu-ma Kuang dismissed with a laugh. Hsing Shu even used his connections with the Empress Dowager's nephews to try to alter the imperial succession from Shen-tsung's eight-year old son Chao Hsü to an older collateral prince, who might be inclined to exercise his dependence from the imperial family by favoring Ts'ai Ch'üeh. Although Hsing Shu and Ts'ai Ch'üeh were not punished for their interference until 1089, Hsing's scheme was immediately denounced by the two nephews.⁴⁴² In the second month of 1085, with the emperor nodding weakly from his sick-bed, Chao Hsü was named heir apparent and his grandmother designated as temporary regent, "until the emperor should recover."⁴⁴³

Shen-tsung's strength was spent, however, and in the third month of 1085 he died. Chao Hsü was proclaimed the new emperor, and authority over all national and military affairs was transferred to Shen-tsung's mother, Ying-tsung's Empress Kao and now the regent and Empress Dowager Hsüan-jen.⁴⁴⁴ As the two chief ministers, Ts'ai Ch'üeh and Wang Kuei controlled official ceremonial in their capacity as the Masters of Imperial Interment (shan-ling shih), but they were powerless to control the unofficial demonstrations set off by the emperor's demise. Ssu-ma Kuang was again in Lo-yang mulling over the offer of a court post when he learned of Shen-tsung's death, and despite his reluctance to be sucked into the politics of an imperial transition he let Ch'eng Hao persuade him to go to the capital to pay his respects. As it happened, Ssu-ma's welcome was even more tumultuous than he could have imagined: the palace guards alerted the populace to Ssu-ma's arrival, by saluting him as "Prime Minister Ssu-ma." The thousands of people who thronged the palace gates at the passing of an emperor pressed in to embrace Ssu-ma's horse, shouting "Please do not return to Lo; stay here to assist the son of heaven bring the people back to life." Ssu-ma Kuang took fright at the demonstration, and making his excuses rushed directly back to Lo-yang.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² HCP, 350, p. 9a; SS, 471, pp. 13702-3. Hsing Shu's perfidy earned him a position among the biographies of the evil ministers.

⁴⁴³ See HCP, 351, pp. 6b-10b; 352, pp. 1a-b. For detailed contemporary accounts see Li T'ao's notes, HCP, 352, pp. 1b-21b.

⁴⁴⁴ HCP, 353, pp. 2a-4a.

⁴⁴⁵ HCP, 353, pp. 9a-b.

At sixty-seven and in poor health, Ssu-ma Kuang was understandably reluctant to leave the quiet of Lo-yang; but from a distance he was ready to advise the Dowager Empress on how to repair the damage done by the reformers. And first priority, he insisted, must go to "opening up the route of remonstrance" to officials and commoners, and to keeping it open with placards in the provinces, drum-calls in the capital, and punishments for anyone who stood in the way.⁴⁴⁶ Yet the response to Ssu-ma Kuang's memorial illustrates the resiliency of the reform faction, which still controlled the state council and the key organs of government. Two months after Che-tsung's accession the government did issue a call for criticism, but to Ssu-ma Kuang's chagrin it was so limited in scope as to be useless. For Ts'ai Ch'üeh had intervened in the drafting process to prohibit on pain of punishment any real criticism of the government's leaders or policies, in order to stem the personal attacks against him that had proliferated since Shen-tsung's death.⁴⁴⁷ If the conservatives were to reverse the policies they so abhorred more would be needed than the support of the Empress Dowager; they would have to oust the New Party men from power and take over the government themselves.

The battle for political power took a full year. In the first months of the new reign the Dowager Empress assembled her forces: Ssu-ma Kuang accepted a post as prefect of Ch'en-chou, just south of K'ai-feng, while Lü Kung-chu, Su Shih, and Ch'eng Hao all came to the capital directly.⁴⁴⁸ Then in the fifth month of 1085 she could make her first big move, for after sixteen undistinguished years as a state councilor Chief Minister Wang Kuei finally died, letting Hsüan-jen put her own stamp on the state council.⁴⁴⁹ Since Ts'ai Ch'üeh's power was still intact he could not be kept from assuming Wang Kuei's post as Left Co-director of the Department of State, but in the ensuing cabinet shuffle Hsüan-jen did win two major victories: she prevented Ts'ai from elevating his own candidate, Chang Tun, to the co-chief ministership, or Right Co-director of the Department of State, obliging Chang to become head of the Bureau of Military Affairs instead; and she convinced Ssu-ma Kuang that for the sake of the nation and the boy emperor he had to take the chancellery position (men-hsia shih-lang) vacated by Chang, even though that meant serving in the state council under Ts'ai Ch'üeh.⁴⁵⁰ Two months

⁴⁴⁶ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i k'ai yen-lu cha-tzu," in SMWC, 46, pp. 585-6, quoted in HCP, 353, pp. 9b-10b.

⁴⁴⁷ Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i kai ch'iu-chien chao-shu cha-tzu," SMWC, 47, pp. 602-3; HCP, 356, pp. 1b-2a.

⁴⁴⁸ HCP, 356, pp. 2a; 6a-7a.

⁴⁴⁹ HCP, 356, p. 9a.

⁴⁵⁰ The co-chief minister's position went to Han Chen, which Hsüan-jen found preferable to having Ts'ai's man in power even though she personally disliked Han. Chang Tun's move still constituted a promotion, from the equivalent of assisting civil councilor to chief military councilor. The reshuffling of the state council also prompted changes in the academic institutes and the Six Boards: Wang An-li returned from Chiang-

later Hsüan-jen's hand was strengthened even further when Lü Kung-chu was appointed to the council as an assistant director of the Department of State (shang-shu tso-ch'eng).⁴⁵¹

Ssu-ma Kuang's presence in the council had a dramatic impact on conservative efforts to overturn the New Policies, for as leader of the opposition throughout Shenzong's reign he was the only man with the prestige needed to offset the entrenched power of the reformers. Much as Wang An-shih had defined the horizons of the reforms fifteen years earlier, Ssu-ma Kuang defined the scope of the conservative restoration. Indeed, it was Ssu-ma Kuang who assured Hsüan-jen that a conservative restoration was ritually appropriate -- that it was legitimate, in short, to reverse a deceased emperor's policies and expel his ministers even before the three years of mourning had passed, if that was the only way to save the nation and its people.⁴⁵² Ssu-ma Kuang's passionate memorials lay the foundation for the conservative critique of activist government, and opened a floodgate of denunciations of the policies it had spawned. But as Pi Chung-yu argued in a letter to Ssu-ma Kuang on his mentor's return to office, critiques and denunciations could accomplish little in the absence of political power:

Now we would move to abolish green sprouts, suspend state trade, remit service exemption taxes, and eradicate the salt-monopoly laws -- all those so-called profitable measures that harm the people. But as soon as we try to weed them out or change them then those men who managed the New Policies will become unhappy; and they will not only complain that 'we cannot abolish green sprouts, suspend state trade, remit service exemption taxes, or eradicate the salt monopoly,' but will also manipulate the emperor's fears that financial resources are inadequate, and harp on the issue, in order to sway the emperor's mind. . . . And because of this, [even if we eradicate the New Policies fiscal measures] the green sprouts funds will be distributed again, state trade will be reestablished, remitted exemption funds will be recollected, and the salt monopoly will be revived.

How then, asked Pi Chung-yu, could the fiscalist policies be irrevocably eradicated? In the long term, it was necessary to remove the fear of fiscal shortages by slowly building up surpluses through prudent economic policies that measured expenditures against income, and returned funds and resources to the regions from which

ning fu to serve in the Han-lin Academy; Lü Hui-ch'ing returned to court as an Academician in the Hall of the Aid to Governance (Tzu-cheng-tien); and Tseng Pu was named Director of the Board of Revenue. See HCP, 356, pp. 11b-15a.

⁴⁵¹ HCP, 358, pp. 2a-3a.

⁴⁵² Ssu-ma Kuang, "Ch'i ch'ü hsin-fa chih ping-min shang-kuo che shu," SMWC, 46, pp. 588-91.

they were collected. In the short term, however, it was necessary to extirpate the agents of the New Policies who still controlled the government:

When Wang An-shih was in office there was no one in office at court or in the provinces who was not his follower, and that is why he could enact his policies. Now we wish to undo the shortcomings of those days, yet out of every ten senior court officials, circuit intendants and departmental directors, and military officers seven or eight are Wang An-shih's followers. Although we have raised two or three venerables to power, and have put six or seven men of virtue in office, there are still tens of their men throughout the hundred offices. Where then is the power to accomplish our objectives?⁴⁵³

Ssu-ma Kuang did not himself have the ruthlessness to wrest political power the way Wang An-shih had done, nor did he have the energy -- for he like Wang was now tired and old. Yet by serving on the state council Ssu-ma Kuang could advise Hsüan-jen on whom to use, and recruit men who did have the drive and energy to purge the reformers and build up a conservative power base. Neither Wang An-shih, who dies in 1086.4, nor Ssu-ma Kuang, who died five months later, lived to fully comprehend the consequences of that purge, which is taken up in the following chapter.

⁴⁵³ SS, 281, pp. 9525-6.