Tseng Kuo-fan’s
Private Bureaucracy
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Tseng Kuo-fan’s
Private Bureaucracy

JONATHAN PORTER
Although the Center for Chinese Studies is responsible for the selection and acceptance of monographs in this series, responsibility for the opinions expressed in them and for the accuracy of statements contained in them rests with their authors.
## Contents

*Foreword* ........................................... 7  
*Author's Acknowledgments* ......................... 11  

**I**  
**INTRODUCTION** ................................... 13  

**II**  
**THE MU-FU: An Ambivalent Tradition** ........... 18  
  The Interaction of “Public” and “Private” in  
  the *Mu-fu* ........................................ 22  
  Officialism or Professionalism? ..................... 26

**III**  
**THE RECRUITMENT OF TALENT** ..................... 30  
  Tseng Kuo-fan’s Use of Men ........................ 31  
  The Problem of Recalcitrant Talent .................. 33  
  Methods of Recruitment ................................ 36  
  Indoctrination or Expertise? ......................... 40

**IV**  
**IN TSENG KUO-FAN’S MU-FU** ...................... 45  
  The Inner *Mu-fu* ................................... 46  
  The Style of Tseng Kuo-fan’s Leadership .......... 53  
  Chao Lieh-wen ....................................... 57

**V**  
**THE GROWTH OF A PRIVATE BUREAUCRACY** ......... 71  
  Tseng Kuo-fan’s Bureaucracy ........................ 75  
  The Process of Elaboration .......................... 79  
  The Role of the *Mu-fu* .............................. 82  
  Advancement of Personnel ............................ 87

**VI**  
**TSENG KUO-FAN’S FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION** .... 92  
  Financial Mobilization ................................ 95  
  A New Fiscal Organization ........................... 105

**VII**  
**SPECIALISTS AND GENERALISTS** .................. 116  
  The Traditional Preeminence of the Generalist .... 121  
  Tseng Kuo-fan’s Specialists ........................ 124  
  Innovation and Modernization ....................... 129
Bibliography ............................................. 134
Glossary .................................................. 142
Index ...................................................... 146

LIST OF TABLES
1. Personnel of the District (Hsien) Administration .... 72
2. Tseng Kuo-fan's Organization in 1858 ................. 74
3. Allocation of Funds Reported by Tseng Kuo-fan,
   1853–1860 ............................................. 96
4. Requests for Provincial Subsidies Made by
   Tseng Kuo-fan, 1854–1860 ......................... 101
5. Receipts of Provincial Subsidies Reported by
   Tseng Kuo-fan, 1853–1860 ......................... 102
Tseng Kuo-fan, the subject of Jonathan Porter’s monograph, has been central to the history of nineteenth-century China. Suppressor of the Taiping Rebels, he was one of the first great t’uan-lien ta-ch’en (militia ministers) permitted to break the Ch’ing “law of avoidance” and serve in his native province of Hunan. There he not only created the base for a vast regional military alliance which eventually captured the Taiping capital at Nanking in 1864; he also was the first major official consistently to sponsor military modernization. Consequently, his policies have become a measure by which many historians have sought to judge the precise character of the political disintegration of the late Ch’ing dynasty.

To Mary Wright, for instance, it was Tseng—more than any other Chinese official—who best embodied the guiding principles of the “T’ung-chih Restoration” (1862–1874).¹ Utterly loyal to the Manchu throne because it represented the traditional order he sought to defend, Tseng reknit the fabric of a society which had been deeply rent by civil war. But because the thread Tseng used was solidly Confucian, the order he helped restore merely postponed necessary social changes. Indeed, he did his work so well that the fall was all the greater in the end: as the dynasty toppled in 1911 it carried the traditional political order with it.

To other historians, however, Tseng’s undermining was not so inadvertent.² His loyalty to the dynasty did keep him from using his personal armies against the throne. But direct action—a coup—was not the historical issue. The dynasty eventually fell because it could not control the provinces, and Tseng, after all, was the progenitor of nineteenth-century regionalism, the first in a long line of powerful viceroys like Tso Tsung-t’ang, Li Hung-chang, Chang Chih-tung, or Yuan Shih-k’ai, each of whom took China one step farther toward warlordism. Wright had emphasized Tseng’s shortsighted reliance upon men of talent rather than upon institutions; these historians stressed his creation of administrative precedents for political decentralization.

The first of these precedents was likin, a special tax levied upon commercial goods after 1853. Likin gave provincial officials like Tseng a new source of revenue apart from taxes budgeted and controlled by the central government, and so presaged the combined fiscal and military powers of the tu-chin (military governors) of the late Ch'ing and early Republican periods.

Personally controlled armies were the second institutional innovation stemming from Tseng Kuo-fan's suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. Emulating famous generals like the Ming official, Ch'i Chi-kuang, Tseng Kuo-fan compensated for the inadequacies of the regular military establishment by recruiting his own army from among village "braves" who were indoctrinated into a hierarchical network of companies each loyal to their own commanders. Tseng's Hsiang Army was far from identical to Yuan Shih-k'ai's Peiyang Army with its professional officers' corps or Chiang Kai-shek's party army dominated by the "Whampoa Clique," but over the run of the century Tseng's military units certainly did appear the first in a definite succession.

In recent years these three institutional accompaniments of regionalization have been carefully scrutinized by a younger generation of Ch'ing historians. David Pong, for example, has argued that likin (which was soon ingested by the central government) alone failed to provide sufficient income for the armies of Tseng Kuo-fan. Indeed, Tseng was so fiscally dependent upon the central government that it took him years of delicate negotiations to divert regular provincial revenue to his own quartermasters. Moreover, as Philip Kuhn has shown, Tseng or Li Hung-chang's regional armies have been confused with another kind of local militarization.4 Most historians had mistaken Tseng's Hsiang Army for an organized conglomerate of rural gentry militia units. But the two were actually quite distinct. In fact, regional authorities and gentry leaders often competed for the same resources, thwarting each other's development.

Similarly, Tseng's mu-fu has come under close observation. Kenneth Folsom's Friends, Guests and Colleagues demonstrated that "tent government" was not just a mid-nineteenth century creation. Because the Ming and Ch'ing governments had decided to reduce government expenses by replacing many officially appointed district clerks with local help, hsien (county) government increasingly depended upon each magistrate's own private staff—a phenomenon repeated at the provincial

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level. This was not to say that Tseng or Li Hung-chang's *mu-fu* was a nineteenth-century reincarnation of Ch'i Chi-kuang's military secretariat. Rather, theirs was a transitional institution, especially crucial as it permitted the regular bureaucracy to employ technological advisors—even Westerners—without being forced to alter the classics-oriented civil service system until long after its time had really run out.

Dr. Porter's monograph plays upon many of these historical themes. Above all, like Folsom's work, it focusses upon the *mu-fu*. But rather than viewing "tent government" as a check upon technocracy, Porter sees it as abetting rationalization, foreshadowing the "modern" bureaucratic structures of the twentieth century. For, Porter shows that the *mu-fu* was not a whole nor single unit. Rationally structured, it was more or less segmented into an inner "tent government" and an outer sub-government, so that Tseng's *mu-fu* and his more formal private bureaucracy can actually be regarded as separate institutions. The *mu-fu* may have later kept technocrats in their proper Confucian place, but its institutional development under Tseng was technical and rational in the purest Weberian sense of those words. Yet, curiously enough, this was not because Tseng himself so intended. In fact, Porter's work suggests how unclear was the distinction between "traditional" and "modern" during this period, since so committed a Confucianist as Tseng could base his personnel evaluation at one and the same time upon *k'an-hsiang* (physiognomy) and functionally oriented examinations.

If Tseng's search for human talent (*jen-ts'ai*) cannot be entirely separated from his creation of new institutions, then both of the primary themes discussed earlier basically remain correct. But in this sense Tseng Kuo-fan neither saved nor destroyed an old order; he unwittingly helped fashion a new one. For, Porter would have us conclude that if there is a key word for Tseng's impact upon the history of the later Ch'ing, then it is neither restoration nor regionalization, but rather rationalization.

**Frederic Wakeman**

Berkeley
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TO ZOË
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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

CSWHP  See Ko Shih-chün, ed., *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-hsü-pien*.
CSWP  See Ho Ch'ang-ling, ed., *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*
PCCP  See Min Erh-ch'ang, ed., *Pei-chuan-chi pu*.

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I

Introduction

Tseng Kuo-fan was a pivotal figure in China's modern transformation. He came at a critical juncture of traditional and modern China. As a "scholar-general" he represented the best that the old order had produced, at a time when it was in decline; yet as an innovator he represented much of the new as well, which he helped to begin. He defended the old order earnestly and faithfully, but his specific efforts on its behalf were the beginning of a shift of emphasis and a new orientation in that order.

Tseng Kuo-fan was called out of temporary retirement at home in Hsiang-hsiang, Hunan, in early 1853 to assist in organizing provincial militia forces in defense against the local rebellion and banditry which had arisen in the wake of the northward passage of the Taiping rebels through Hunan in the previous year.¹ From these rather small beginnings, Tseng went on to become the chief guardian of the old order against the Taiping assault and the principal agent in the ultimate suppression of the rebellion. The means by which he accomplished this task was the creation of a supraprovincial military organization, and the fiscal and administrative structure necessary for its support and direction.

The Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) was a watershed in the process of China's transformation.² The rebellion itself contributed to China's political, economic, and social disintegration in the nineteenth century. At the same time, the measures used to suppress the rebellion stimulated the development of new institutional forms. The rebellion presented the Ch'ing state with a challenge which the regular military forces, in their moribund condition, were increasingly incapable of combating. Under these circumstances the Court sought supplementary means to stem the progress of the rebellion. It turned especially to regional initiative and cooperative action on a semi-official plane to halt the spread of local social and political disintegration.³ Once set in motion, the process of regionalizing authority ultimately developed beyond the government's

¹ Ta-Ch'ing Wen-tsung Hsien-huang-ti shih-lu [Veritable Record of the Hsien-feng Reign of the Ch'ing Dynasty] (8 vols.; Taipei: 1964), II, 1015. 8 January 1853.


³ This topic is comprehensively discussed in Philip Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
ability to direct and control it effectively. The failure of the government's own institutional means of control, its default in this crisis, was therefore the basis for the appearance of new institutional phenomena, including military, economic, and bureaucratic forms. In the long run, the suppression of the rebellion became much more significant for China's transformation than was the rebellion itself.

The personal regional armies that developed during and after the Taiping Rebellion not only aggravated the disintegration of China's traditional imperial order but also influenced China's adaptation to the problems of modernization. Because the first and most obvious threat to China in the nineteenth century came in a military form, principally from the West, China's response was initially conditioned by a military emphasis. Militarization, developing within Chinese society in response to primarily internal problems of change, also reinforced this emphasis at this time. Repeatedly thereafter, military questions took precedence in China's transformation, such that it is possible to speak of a rising military trend in modern China running into the present and displacing the predominant civil emphasis of late-traditional China. But less dramatic and obvious institutional changes, and adjustments which accompanied these developments, were equally significant. Particularly important in the context of the Chinese bureaucratic tradition of the humanistic, cultivated generalist was the emergence of an explicit emphasis on specialization and technical expertise.

This is a study of the "private bureaucracy" which developed under Tseng Kuo-fan's direction, and the institutional departures which it facilitated in the process of China's modernization in the nineteenth century. Tseng's army itself, its structure and operations, are beyond the proper scope of this subject. His administrative structure evolved from the first to serve the purposes of his military operations; but Tseng's activities in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion were not limited to the creation and direction of his army or his military campaigns. His organization grew to be much more than a purely military one and its scope transcended that of the army.


5 Cf. Kuhn, 9.

6 The best work in Chinese on the specific subject of Tseng's Hsiang Army and its origins is Lo Erh-kang's study cited in n. 4 above. In English, William J. Hail, *Tseng Kuo-fan and the Taiping Rebellion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927) discusses Tseng's rise and describes his military campaigns. Other, earlier works in a more traditional vein include Wang K'ai-yün, *Hsiang-chün chih*
My purpose is to examine the institutional foundations of Tseng’s organization; his innovations, primarily in the areas of personnel and finance; and the significance for China’s modernization of the institutional changes which arose from his organization. Tseng’s contribution to the process of modernization was conditioned by the character of its institutional background.

Inevitably, Tseng encountered the problem of mobilizing resources, of both materiel and personnel, in order to overcome the inertia and immobility inherent in the inflexible official system. Achieving this mobilization required that he reach outside the scope of regular official practice for effective organizational means. He began essentially with two institutions already at hand and available to him as semi-official adjuncts to the official bureaucracy: the local militia corps (t’uan-lien) and the official’s personal staff (mu-fu). In the case of the militia system, Tseng built on foundations already well prepared by others. Nonetheless, as far as the court’s explicit mandate was concerned, the t’uan-lien was Tseng’s nominal starting point, and it was the basis for the creation by him of a new military force on a scale surpassing this original local orientation. As for the mu-fu system, it was the basis from which Tseng elaborated a personal administrative apparatus.

As Tseng’s starting point for the creation of his private bureaucracy, the mu-fu was an administrative practice already firmly established among regional officials in the Ch’ing period. The mu-fu in itself was a relatively informal, amorphous, and highly personal institution, but what grew out of it under Tseng’s hand was much more formal, structured, and impersonally organized. The mu-fu could not ultimately contain this evolution, but it was still the source. Just as Tseng departed from the t’uan-lien model of local defense to develop a regional army, he also departed from the mu-fu model of administration to develop a private bureaucracy.

While Tseng’s administrative apparatus was developing, his mu-fu persisted as its core. Consequently personal and impersonal qualities coexisted in his organization. Personal ties and friendship exerted a powerful influence on the working of Chinese institutions and society. I sug-

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7 See Philip Kuhn’s study, the seminal work on this subject, which discusses the process of militarization leading up to and including Tseng’s activities. Kuhn suggests three levels of militarization arising from local militia practices, in parallel, orthodox, and heterodox hierarchies. In the orthodox hierarchy, the levels are t’uan-lien, yung forces (characterized by greater mobility and professionalism), and the regional army. Tseng’s achievement was to develop the third level from the second. For a synopsis of this thesis, see Kuhn, 166–167.

8 The only extensive treatment of this subject in any language of which I am aware is Kenneth Folsom, Friends, Guests, and Colleagues: The Mu-fu System in the Late Ch’ing Period (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). I am indebted to Folsom’s pioneering study for helping to illuminate the way forward.
gest that impersonal, organizational factors of comparable significance, in addition to this personalism, affected China’s process of modernization.\(^9\)

Kenneth Folsom has studied the application of the *mu-fu* system, primarily under Li Hung-chang. My perspective on the problem sometimes conflicts with Folsom’s. This conflict is in part terminological, in part substantive. Folsom seems not to recognize explicitly the process of structural evolution of the *mu-fu* into something which can no longer be intelligibly characterized as a *mu-fu*.\(^10\) Perhaps this is only a terminological conflict of view, however. More importantly, Folsom seems to understand the *mu-fu* as itself a key element of policy, the potential solution to China’s problems in the nineteenth century. He concludes that its potential was aborted because, in spite of its flexibility, it was too imbued with the assumptions of the traditional order.\(^11\) But it was really only one traditional basis from which to approach China’s modern problems (the *t’uan-lien* was another). The question is not whether the *mu-fu* was abortive or not, but how its application affected China’s modernization. New institutional forms and emphases evolved from *mu-fu* practice. These forms and emphases presupposed assumptions distinct from those of the traditional order, and were not abortive in the long run. Folsom does stress the growing emphasis on professionalism and expertise, a theme which this study will develop further.

Tseng Kuo-fan’s activities involved him in a paradox. The more he acted to defend his threatened culture and society, the more he affected the substance of that culture and society. It is unlikely that Tseng foresaw the full consequences of his actions. He was certainly aware that his organization was extraordinary; he may have dimly appreciated his paradoxical position. In several specific and individual cases he was indeed a conscious innovator—in financial measures, and the adaptation of western technology, for instance. But the full measure of his contribution to China’s transformation was beyond his appreciation.

It is not necessary to regard Tseng as consciously innovative to understand his activities as leading to innovation. Tseng had no desire to initiate fundamental institutional change. He began by following well established patterns of activity and applying proven models of organization. Taken individually, many of his measures did not amount to innovation. But the whole is sometimes greater than the sum of its parts. Collectively—and here the magnitude of Tseng’s operations may have been critical—his activities and organization became innovative.

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\(^9\) The rationale for Folsom’s study is the existence of a pattern of personal relationships in the behind-the-scenes operation of the traditional Chinese official world, informing its reaction to China’s modern problems. *Ibid.*, Preface, 16ff., 64, 66, 72, 95.


critical period contributed to the emergence of a new kind of career in China’s subsequent period of transformation. New organizations and enterprises emphasized a new type of bureaucratic personality. Professionalism and specialization, as themes in China’s modernization, took their cue from the *mu-ju* system and were promoted by Tseng’s private bureaucracy.

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12 Cf. Lo Erh-kang, 73.
II

The *Mu-fu*: An Ambivalent Tradition

The *mu-fu* system was an important adjunct to the Chinese bureaucratic tradition, yet it has attracted relatively little systematic study because of the elusive character of materials dealing with the subject.¹ The study of Chinese institutional history has largely proceeded from easily approachable and extensive collections of explicit documentary records—laws, procedural regulations, descriptions of official institutions, official communications and reports. In contrast, sources for the study of the *mu-fu* are far less approachable, or often non-existent. The *mu-fu* system seems to have flourished as never before in the late-traditional Ming and Ch’ing era. But in part because of its personal character, and in part because its presence was taken for granted, it remained virtually unrecorded. Thus, although the *mu-fu* was ultimately tied to the practical operation of the official system, its form seldom surfaced in official documentation.² Instead, one has to approach the institution through the medium of gleanings from extra-official writings such as essays, memoirs, biographies, and diaries.³ Even here, problems arise from the obscure nature of the institution which, with the rare exception of revealing personal accounts, frequently allows only brief and cryptic reference. All too often in biographies, for instance, one is confronted with an unelaborated statement that the subject entered someone’s *mu-fu*.⁴

¹ There is no definitive and systematic study of the *mu-fu* institution per se, its origins, nature, and development, such as there is for the examination system, the guilds, the salt administration, or the land tax, to name only a few. The Chinese studies cited below are all articles of limited scope. Folsom’s work is limited to a particular period and context, and relates principally to Li Hung-chang. Important studies of Chinese institutional history in English often barely take the *mu-fu* system into account: For example see Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-chih Restoration, 1862–1874* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 92; and Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), 31. These two seminal studies are noteworthy for treating subjects on which the *mu-fu* system had an important bearing.

² Cf. Ho Ch’ang-ling, ed., *Huang-ch’ao ching-shih wen-pien* [Collected Essays on Statecraft during the Ch’ing Dynasty] (3 vols.; Taipei: 1963) [hereafter cited as CSWP], I, 647; Min Erh-ch’ang, ed., *Pei-chuan-chi pu* [Supplement to Collected Biographical Epitaphs] (60 chüan; Peking: 1923) [hereafter cited as PCCP], 55:15a-b.

³ Chang Ch’un-ming, “Ch’ing-tai ti mu-chih” [The *Mu System of the Ch’ing Period*], *Ling-nan hsueh-pao*, IX, 2 (June 1949), 33.

Studies of the mu-fu as an institution and a practice have had as virtually their sole antecedent (and a relatively recent one at that) the handbooks on local administration written by Wang Hui-tsu in the late eighteenth century. This fact, as well as the paucity of early explicit commentary on the mu-fu, is illustrated by the section dealing with mu-fu secretaries in the Huang-ch’ao ching-shih wen-pien, an encyclopedia of the theory and practice of administration first published in 1827. The preponderance of the material in this section comprises selections from Wang Hui-tsu; only one selection of less than one page in length is by another writer. A rising interest in the mu-fu, reflecting its expanded application in the late Ch’ing period, is visible in a sequel to this work dating from 1888, which contains selections of much greater variety and scope. But here again, the quantity of material is very small. Rising interest in the mu-fu is also evident in the less formal, and likewise less dependable Ch’ing-pai lei-ch’ao. This anecdotal compilation presents an extensive array of entertaining excerpts, a large number of which relate to late nineteenth century mu-fu practice.

Among the more recent explicit studies of the history and nature of the mu-fu (as distinct from less analytical collections of advice and anecdotes), that of Chang Ch’un-ming takes its point of departure from Wang Hui-tsu and relies heavily on him throughout. Current work on the mu-fu has expanded somewhat in outlook, but is still represented by very limited work in Chinese, Japanese, or English. The objective of the

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6 CSWP, I, 646–657. See note 2 above for the full citation. For a description of this work, see Frederic Wakeman’s article in Ch’ing-shih wen-ti, I, 10 (February 1969), 8–22.


9 Chang Ch’un-ming, 33. This thoughtful and interpretive critique remains one of the best articles on the subject.

10 In Chinese, Miao Ch’üan-chi appears to be the principal student of the mu-fu system (see Bibliography for his published articles). I am indebted to Professor Miao, of the National Political University, Taipei, for the assistance he has extended to me in the study of the mu-fu. In English, as far as I am aware, published study of the mu-fu is limited to Kenneth Folsom’s work and Ch’ü T’ung-ts’u, Local Government in China under the Ch’ing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). Folsom’s chapter on the traditional mu-fu seems to be mainly a synthesis of Chang Ch’un-ming’s article, and Ch’üan Tseng-yu, “Ch’ing-tai mu-liao chih-tu lun” [On the Mu-liao System of the Ch’ing Period], Ssu-hsiang yü shih-tai yüeh-k’an, XXXI (February 1944), 29–35; XXXII (March 1944), 35–43. In Japanese, there is Miyazaki Ichisada, “Shindai no shori to bakayü,” Tōyōshi-kenkyū, XVI, 4 (March 1958), 1–28. This article was not available to me.
present chapter is not, however, to attempt a comprehensive study of the 
mu-fu institution generally, but rather to examine some important aspects 
of it as it had emerged by the nineteenth century, especially in the con-
text of China’s modern transformation.

To call the mu-fu an “institution” or a “system” raises the question of 
its basic definition. The use of the term mu-fu to refer to an informal 
office goes back to pre-Ch’in times.11 There was little continuity in its use 
before the Ming, however.12 A fundamental change in its application oc-
curred about the beginning of the Ming. Because it was not part of the 
statutory bureaucratic structure of the Ch’ing, the mu-fu lacked any offi-
cial definition. Nonetheless, it gradually became an established practice 
in the provincial administration of the Ming-Ch’ing period. By the time 
of the nineteenth century, it was recognized as a permanent institution.13

Apart from this progressive institutionalization of the mu-fu, it is 
equally possible to speak of the mu-fu career as a “tradition”: mu-fu 
service was not uncommonly communicated from master to disciple as 
as a special vocation and a respected learning.14 Moreover, the mu-fu career 
became the local specialty of natives of Shao-hsing, in Chekiang province. 
Actually, Shao-hsing natives were by no means prevalent in mu-fu posi-
tions, but the colloquialism “Shao-hsing master” (Shao-hsing shih-yeh) 
came to describe mu-fu secretaries from that area.15 Consequently, in the 
eyes both of its patrons and of those who entered its service, the mu-fu 
represented an identifiable career and its followers composed a distinct 
institutional sub-class often with its own esprit de corps.16

Attempts to understand the mu-fu through an analysis of its nomen-
clature have not been particularly enlightening. In fact, it is questionable 
whether it is meaningful or useful to examine the connotations of the vari-
ous terms, and their components, associated with the mu-fu—e.g., mu-fu, 
“tent government”; mu-pin or mu-k’o, “tent guest”; mu-liao, “tent col-
league”; mu-yu, “tent friend.”17 The only basic distinction which can be

11 Ch’üan Tseng-yu, XXXI, 29.
12 Folsom, 33–38.
13 Miao Ch’üan-chi, “Ch’ing-tai hsing-mu shu-yao” [A Discussion of the Legal 
Secretaries of the Ch’ing Period] reprinted from Chung-kuo fa-chih shih lun-chi 
[Collected Articles on the History of the Chinese Legal System] (Taipei: n.d.), 323;
and by the same author, “Ch’ing-tai mu-fu chih kuan-mu kuan-hsi yii mu-fu lei-
pieh” [The Relationship between the Official and the Secretary, and the Classifica-
tion of Secretaries in the Mu-fu of the Ch’ing Period], Ssu yü yen, VII, 1 May 
1969), 37.
14 Cf. CSWHP, I, 475. Ch’ih Chuang, “Ch’ing-tai mu-pin men-ting” [Secretaries 
and Gatemen of the Ch’ing Period], Ta-lu tsao-chih, V, 2 (July 1952). 15.
15 Cf. Hsü K’o, XI, Mu-liao-lei, 2. Wang Hui-tsu was a native of this locality. 
But as Ch’ü T’ung-tsu has pointed out, it is erroneous to assume that all secretaries 
were from Shao-hsing. Ch’ü, 268–269, n. 169.
17 For example, Ch’ih Chuang has drawn a distinction between mu-liao, sup-
posedly implying a subordinate relationship to the patron, and mu-pin, implying a 
position of equality and special honor. Ch’ih Chuang, 15. The term for the military
made is that between *mu-fu*, designating the institution generally or the organization specifically, and the other terms, designating persons serving in the *mu-fu*. As these latter terms became conventionally interchangeable, whatever distinctions they may have possessed originally were obliterated in practice. Consequently their application has been much less precise than their variety might otherwise suggest. This imprecision is reflected in the extent to which the primary term, *mu-fu*, for example, has been applied as a comprehensive label for the most diverse phenomena, including even such ramified organizations as those of Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang which greatly exceeded the scope of the normal *mu-fu*.

The denotations of this terminology have implications often quite different from those of its connotations. The connotations of friendship and personal relationships in such terms as *mu-yu* and *mu-pin* (applied to personnel serving in the *mu-fu*), for instance, have tended to obscure the functional or subordinate technical role of persons entering these positions. The principal ambiguity involved in interpreting the *mu-fu* hinges particularly on this discrepancy between the denotative and connotative aspects of its terminology. I do not intend to suggest here that personal relations did not in fact pervade the *mu-fu* system. The basic question is the compatibility or priority of two values—friendship and technical competence. Were these values compatible? And did one have priority over the other? This may also be expressed as a question of equality or subordination in *mu-fu* service. What was most important about the *mu-yu*: his personal friendship and equality with his patron, or his technical proficiency?

Naturally, neither equality nor subordination alone contains the whole truth of the matter. The personal integrity and self-esteem of the *mu-fu* secretary, whose informal credentials as a learned man and an administrative specialist demanded that he receive honored treatment, have been repeatedly emphasized. The mutual respect theoretically entailed by his position required that the *mu-yu* remonstrate with his patron concerning the latter's deficiencies or errors, and that he resign if his remonstrance went unsatisfied. Of course, from the *mu-yu*'s point of view, the connotations of friendship and respect in the terms which described his role may have been an attractive rationalization for his subordinate position. At the same time, it seems likely that few patrons took the cynical view that a secretary was merely a functional subordinate. Given the pervasive influence of the ideals of human relationships in the tradi-

government of the Shogun, which flourished through the Tokugawa period in Japan, is identical with the term *mu-fu* in Chinese.

18 Cf. CSWP, I, 650; CSWHP, I, 475; Miao Ch'üan-chi, "Ch'ing-tai mu-fu chih kuan-mu kuan-hsi . . .," 27; Folsom, 48–49; Ch'ü, 108.
19 CSWP, I, 651; Ch'ih Chuang, 16.
tional Chinese political and social system, it is not possible to dismiss as merely a question of vantage point the ambiguity involved in the mu-fu relationships.

The expectation that the self-respecting mu-yu should not be a mere "yes-man" was no hollow idealization. Yet after all, the primary motivation for recruiting mu-fu secretaries was their knowledge and special proficiency in the complexities of administration and their practical assistance with the burdens of office. Where their personal status relative to their employer was concerned, much depended on the relative eminence of the official in question as well as on the variable status of the type of function served within the mu-fu. In spite of their ideal representations, therefore, such terms as mu-yu and mu-liao have in practice come to denote positions of formally subordinate technical service. This was clearly the case in the structure and operation of Tseng Kuo-fan's mu-fu.

Apparently sensing the inherent ambivalence in mu-fu service, Wang Hui-tsu attempted to reconcile the personal ideal of friendship and loyalty based on mutual respect with the impersonal ideal of technical competence founded on experience and training, through a pragmatic compromise. He suggested that reliance on the mu-yu and implementation of his advice by the official depended on the mu-yu's proven competence, and that the mu-yu's self-esteem and integrity insured that he would render faithful service to the official. In Wang Hui-tsu's time, at least, this was probably a convincing rationalization.

The Interaction of "Public" and "Private" in the Mu-fu

In viewing the historical evolution of the mu-fu system, it has been generally agreed that the mu-fu which emerged in the Ming-Ch'ing period was a new institution fundamentally different in character from its predecessors. This novelty of the later institution depends on the distinction between the official or quasi-official status of the earlier system and the essentially private nature of the mu-fu in the Ming-Ch'ing period. (This being the case, the utility of examining the terminology of the earlier institution in order to understand the later is all the more questionable.)

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20 See Chap. IV for cases of a mu-yu's remonstrance with Tseng Kuo-fan.
22 Certain types of mu-yu were more highly regarded than others: the legal and financial mu-yu (hsing-ming and ch'ien-ku) were most important, and within the range of some positions such as the "Correspondence secretary" (shu-ch'i) there could be various alternative names and grades sometimes reflecting different status. Miao chüan-chi, "Ch'ing-tai mu-fu chih kuan-mu kuan-hsi . . .," 29, 31.
23 CSWG, I, 651.
24 Some further problems related to this ambivalence will be suggested and discussed in Chap. VII.
25 Chang Ch'ung-ming, 32.
A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the emergence of the characteristic Ming-Ch'ing mu-fu system and why it flourished particularly during the Ch'ing period. These reasons may be organized into several main categories:\(^{27}\)

(1) **Insufficient subordinate personnel.** The insufficient number and low status of the subordinate official personnel supplied to provincial and local officials in this period, coupled with the untrustworthiness of the clerks serving in the local yamens, necessitated private hiring of personal secretaries.\(^{28}\)

(2) **Complexities and burdens of office.** The increasing complexities and technicalities of public administration, especially in the areas of law and taxation on which an official's conduct in office was judged, as well as the quantitative burden of public duties such as official communications, necessitated relying on skilled personnel to assist the official in his duties.\(^{29}\)

(3) **Conditions of official selection and appointment.** Lack of practical training in administration in the preparation of prospective officials for their public duties, and the unfamiliarity with local conditions and customs in the area in which the official was posted, were an additional impetus to retaining secretaries competent in these matters.\(^{30}\) These two factors arose from the impractical orientation of the civil service examinations (particularly with the development during the Ming-Ch'ing period of the “eight-legged” examination style), and from the “law of avoidance” which required that officials not be posted to their home province.

(4) **Historical and institutional factors.** The increasingly restrictive and narrow path to an official career stimulated the popularity of the mu-fu service as an alternative career for those who were unable or disinclined

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\(^{27}\) This arrangement has been adapted from Miao Ch'üan-chi, “Ch'ing-tai mu-fu chih-tu chih ch'eng-chang yuan-yin” [Reasons for the Growth of the Mu-fu System in the Ch'ing Period], Ssu yü yen, V, 3 (September 1967), 25–33, 41. Similar observations, as cited below, have been made by other writers, but Miao's is the most comprehensive treatment.

\(^{28}\) See particularly ibid., 27; also Chang Ch'un-ming, 35, 42; Miao Ch'üan-chi, “Ch'ing-tai hsing-mu shu-yao,” 328–329; CSWHP, I, 476–477.

\(^{29}\) Cf. CSWP, I, 650; CSWHP, I, 476. In this respect, C. K. Yang's statements that “the size and qualitative complexity of most bureaucratic offices were still comprehensible to the non-specialist,” and that “the main regulative force was the moral order, not formal law or a highly specialized administrative apparatus,” appear to over-simplify the situation. C. K. Yang, “Some Characteristics of Chinese Bureaucratic Behavior,” in D. S. Nivison and A. F. Wright, eds., Confucianism in Action (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 141, 145. Thus John Watt stresses the legalistic constraints and pressures on the local administration of the district magistrate. See his “Ch'ing Emperors and District Magistrates,” Ch'ing-shih wen-t' i, I, 8 (May 1968), 16–23; and “Leadership Criteria in Late Imperial China,” Ch'ing-shih wen-t' i, II, 3 (July 1970), especially 24–25. See also his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (cited above, n. 26), which discusses at length this conflict between moral and legal rationales for administration.

\(^{30}\) CSWP, I, 650; CSWHP, I, 475.
to adjust to the arbitrary demands of that path. A great expansion in the number of sheng-yuan (holders of the lowest examination degree) by the late Ming, unmatched by a proportional enlargement of the quotas for the higher degrees, aggravated the frustrations of the examination system. Furthermore, following the Manchu conquest, the mu-fu offered an opportunity for employment to those who refused formal official position under the conquerors. Another factor, also bearing on the complexities and burdens of administration was the population increase in China from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Not accompanied by any corresponding increase in local official personnel, this increase seems to have added substantially to the quantitative complication of local administration.

As these conditions affecting its development clearly indicate, in form and rationale the mu-fu system of the Ch'ing period was an extra-official supplement to the official bureaucratic system. As such, it flourished in an area where the public demands of the official world and the private interests of the individual official overlapped. In its response to deficiencies in the bureaucratic system and the burdens of a bureaucratic career, it served a public function; but in its promotion as well as its immediate allegiance, it remained a private staff. This dual role imparted to the mu-fu its special character and significance.

"Public" (kung) and "private" (ssu) are a familiar polarity in Chinese political thought. One historian, in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese political history, has suggested that these two themes interacted to define its course. In this sense, "public" and "private" are seen as two fundamental categories of political dynamics: impersonal "administrative system" (chih-tu), characterized by definite structure and formal clarity; and personal "means" or "measures" (fa-shu), practical implementation without established definition or structure. With the development of centralized political power and autocratic control in

31 On the exclusiveness of official recruitment through the examination system, see Watt, "Leadership Criteria in Late Imperial China," 20 & 27.
32 See Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), 174-182. Ho notes that the total number of sheng-yuan increased from approximately 30,000 in 1438 to approximately 600,000 at the end of the Ming. In contrast, the chin-shih totals remained stable through the same period. Ibid., 189.
34 Cf. Watt, dissertation, 22.
36 See John Watt's dissertation for another discussion of this interesting dichotomy in the Chinese political tradition. Watt's treatment is focused primarily on forms of landholding, from Chou feudalism through the enduring Legalist-Confucian economic and political dispute subsequent to the Legalist abolition of feudalism. Watt, dissertation, 275-287.
the Ch'ing state, private influence as represented by such informal institutions as the *mu-fu* stood out in sharper contrast against its public background.\(^{37}\)

Although the *mu-yu* had no official status, he handled official business, and represented a private means for the implementation of public policy.\(^{38}\) There were various schemes to regularize and legitimatize *mu-fu* either by formally incorporating it into the regular official structure, or by connecting it to channels of official recruitment (as was done before the Ming).\(^{39}\) Any such schemes were doomed to failure, however. Officialization of the *mu-fu* would have vitiating its purpose as far as the official who employed it was concerned. As I have suggested, there was more to the secretary's role than mere functional subordination. The trust and personal allegiance involved in the *mu-fu* relationship had their own utility. Especially as centralized control became more rigorous under the Ch'ing, the official needed dependable personal retainers. In this sense (but probably only in this sense), the *mu-yu*’s function was analogous to that of the eunuchs serving the Ming emperors or the bondservants serving the Ch'ing emperors: their entire allegiance was owed to their patron. If it had been merely functional subordinates that the official required, the government might have provided them. In fact, in a limited way, it did supply them in the form of the clerks which served every *yamen*. Here, in the differentiation of clerks and secretaries, the polarity of public and private stands clearly revealed. As the clerks, who were themselves originally a kind of private staff, received increasing official recognition through the Ming, a cleavage developed between the public underlings attached to the office and the private underlings of the official.\(^{40}\) The official could not function without his private staff.

The *mu-fu* consequently remained an unofficial adjunct to the official structure. Because it straddled the institutional boundary between the visible public sector and the cryptic private sector, public and private interests often ceased to be clearly differentiated in its operations:

Having been invited by his host, the *mu-yu* was the host's private staff, and the object of his loyalty was his host, not the nation. The work he did was called public affairs but was actually private business, so that when private and public were the same, then public comprised private and conversely private comprised public. His objective was not how best to accomplish matters, but how to perfect appearances, rectify improprieties, and enable his host to evade re-

\(^{37}\) Cf. *ibid.*, 279–280. Here, for instance, Watt suggests that the private domain “developed an institutional formation” through the clan system from Sung times.

\(^{38}\) Cf. CSWP, I, 647; PCCP, 55:15a.

\(^{39}\) Ch'üan Tseng-yu, XXXI, 30; Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, 115. See also Hsü K'o, XI, *Mu-liao-let*, 1; and CSWHP, I, 476, for examples of such proposals.

sponsibility. The financial secretary was absorbed in the apportionment and juggling of funds, so that his host not only would not incur any liability but best of all might make a little profit. The legal secretary was concerned not with equitable justice but with avoiding official attention. To take public as private, to take private as public, neither one nor the other yet both together—this may be said to be the special characteristic of the mu-yu system.41

Despite the obvious hostility of this passage, the ambiguity of the allegiance and influence of the mu-fu is well illustrated here.

From its intermediate position the mu-fu could exert an influence, whether for good or for ill, in either sector. Wang Hui-tsu believed that the mu-fu secretary ought to have a responsibility to society, to mitigate the possible oppression of the officials.42 Whatever the actual case, both the welfare of the people in general and the reputation of the official in particular were affected by the secretary's actions.43 That both public and private interests were served by the mu-fu points to the main significance of the institution: its capacity to exert a critical influence on its institutional environment, derived from its intermediate position, which finally made it practically indispensable.44 As in the case of other comparable elements of the Chinese social and political order, this very ambivalence was the key ingredient responsible for the influential role played by such institutions or groups.45 Mu-fu practice exhibited a principal mode of political activity in traditional China: private means to accomplish public ends. To the extent that public ends and private means were differentiated in this way, private means could freely be expanded. In this mode, institutional changes accompanying modernization in the nineteenth century thus tended to remain confined within the limits of their traditional framework. A latent feature of this pattern was the possibility of private recruitment and hiring for public service. As it became an accepted administrative tool, the mu-fu was the stock-in-trade of regional officials. Tseng Kuo-fan started from this point.

**Officialism or Professionalism?**

Because the mu-fu was not structurally incorporated into the legalistic framework of the bureaucracy, it was potentially free from many of the debilitating constraints imposed by the increasingly petrified official sys-

41 Chang Ch'un-ming, 49.
42 CSWP, I, 651.
43 Ibid.
45 Philip Kuhn's study of the t'uan-lien system particularly comes to mind in this respect. A central theme in his treatment is the ambiguous nature of the t'uan-lien practice. Similarly, Ch'ü T'ung-tsu and Chang Chung-li emphasize the mediating role of the gentry elite which pervaded activities in the margin between the official and non-official spheres of society and politics. See Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, chap. X, and Chang Chung-li, 32–70.
tern. The continuity and stability of the more than five hundred years of the Ming-Ch'ing epoch (1368–1911) was the most decisive influence on this institutional petrification. Several salient themes characterized the process: increasingly rigid social stratification and immobility; the oppressive growth of autocracy and political centralization of the imperial institution since the Mongol conquest preceding the Ming; a rising cultural and political formalism, most evident in the sterility of the examination system and particularly of the "eight-legged" examination style; the stifling influence of intellectual and cultural orthodoxy, which by the end of the Ming amounted virtually to a failure of creativity in Chinese civilization. Of course, one may point to specific exceptions—early Ch'ing empiricism, possibly—but against the cumulative weight of these adverse factors they could have slight effect. By the nineteenth century traditional China had reached a point not so much of disintegration but of stasis.

As a flexible adaptation to the rigorous and formalistic bureaucracy, the mu-fu was capable of continual evolution. This mutability allowed it to assume various forms, from a simple personal secretarial staff to a complex and diversified private apparatus. Nevertheless, to the degree that it was necessarily responsive to the demands of the system it served, it could also not help but be strongly infected by the pervasive spirit of that system.

Thus a further ambiguity emerges. On one hand, the mu-fu system might be regarded as a shadow—or reflection—cast by the official system in its own sterile image. In this sense, it unavoidably included the worst features of the official system. On the other hand, the mu-fu might be seen, by virtue of the adaptability of the institution, as a fertile breeding ground for new careers not encouraged by the old official system. Concisely stated, the mu-fu developed contrasting tendencies toward sterile officialism and vital new professionalism.

One can detect a rising note of criticism and disenchantment with the mu-fu system in the shift of emphasis between the relevant sections of the Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien (1827) and its sequel the Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-hsü-pien (1888). The changing view of the mu-fu mirrored there tells one side of the story of the progress of the institution. In contrast to the idealizations of Wang Hui-tsu, which compose the majority of the section on the mu-fu in the earlier work, the later commentators focused on the disadvantages of the system and the decline of the tradition, even extending to problems of corruption. A decline in the competence and ability of mu-yu, and cliques and combinations among mu-yu to the detriment of public administration, were singled out for attack. Whether or not these views were a fair representation of the general conception of the time, their selection for inclusion in the later com-

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46 CSWHP, I, 475–477.
pendium reflected an inimical judgment of the *mu-fu* in the late nineteenth century when its use, and abuse, had greatly expanded. Such criticism does not appear in the prior collection, which predated that expansion.

More drastic criticism came from one modern scholar who found it necessary to reject the *mu-fu* system as a practice in no way worthy of modern emulation. In a scathing indictment which did not stop at problems of decline and corruption traceable ultimately only to particular faults of individuals, Chang Ch'un-ming saw the *mu-fu* as responsible for perpetuating a kind of bureaucratic perversion, confusing means with ends in administrative practice. In his view, while the *mu-fu* served the official system, it elevated production of public documents over actual performance of public affairs. The flow of official communications is indispensable in the operation of any public administration, but in assisting this function the *mu-fu* made of an administrative means an end in itself.\footnote{Chang Ch'un-ming, 49–50.}

But this officialism in the orientation of the *mu-fu* tells only one side of the story. On the other side, the history of the *mu-fu* constantly reveals its role as a training agency, from which specialized careers developed.\footnote{Cf. Ch'i'h Chuang, 16; Miao Ch'üian-chi, "Ch'ing-tai hsing-mu shu-yao," 346-347, 357; Chang Ch'un-ming, 38; Ch'u T'ung-tsu, 95, 108–109; Folsom, 47.}

In this sense, the *mu-fu* tradition embodied a tendency toward professionalism in contrast to the fundamental nonprofessional orientation of the official bureaucracy.\footnote{For further discussion on this important contrast, see the concluding chapter.} However, the possibility that a *mu-fu* career could become a profession raises the question whether it was indeed a primary and permanent professional commitment, or rather only a secondary and transitory occupation leading to a different primary goal.

Certainly a significant number of *mu-yu* were drawn from the ranks of aspiring scholars and even degree-holders who looked to the *mu-fu* for expedient temporary employment and possibly useful supplementary practical experience.\footnote{This view is exemplified by Ch'u T'ung-tsu, 107.} Many of these people, for whom the ultimate focus of their attention remained achievement of official status through the examination system, continued to concentrate on becoming adept in the accepted areas of classical learning.\footnote{CSWHP, I, 475–476.} But equally significant were the large numbers who found in the *mu-fu* a permanent resting place or a last resort after failure in the examinations, or who were indifferent to a regular political career.\footnote{Chang Ch'un-ming, 44. Examples of this type may be found in Hummel, 65, 238–239, 636, 641, 666, 814.} Such men sometimes hoped to achieve success through their association with the success of their patron. A *mu-fu* career could still be taken seriously as an end in itself. Those who took up a career as a legal secretary often exhibited a genuine professional commitment.\footnote{Chang Ch'un-ming, 38; Miao Ch'üian-chi, "Ch'ing-tai hsing-mu shu-yao," 360.}

Two basic career types thus coexisted in the *mu-fu* tradition, though
by no means were they equally numerous. This duality echoed the am-
bivalence, discussed above in this chapter, between the orientations of personal friendship (implying equality) and technical proficiency (imply-
ing subordination). 54

Probably the critical factor promoting this dual potential in the mu-fu was the progressive narrowing and closing of the early liberal channels of advancement from private secretarial service into official careers before the Ming period. 55 As pointed out above, the mu-fu of the Ming-Ch’ing era, unlike its earlier antecedents, was an essentially extra-official institu-
tion. In the absence of officially recognized procedures, it provided few or no opportunities for direct advancement into the bureaucracy. Conse-
quently the mu-fu career was correspondingly depreciated in the eyes of those who sought access to official careers. 56

Henceforth two alternatives were open to those who, for one reason or another, still wished to enter mu-fu service. One was to use the mu-fu as a temporary base, especially for the material support it offered, from which to attempt to enter the bureaucracy through the prescribed (and increas-
ingly restricted) avenue of the examination system. The other was to make of mu-fu service a permanent professional career of a new and different kind. Throughout the early Ch’ing, the first alternative was much more important and attractive than the second. The second alternative took on new significance in the nineteenth century because of new stimuli and opportunities of a new order. Furthermore, with the disintegration of the traditional order, and the tarnishing of its former attractions, achieve-
ments of status in the old manner lost much of its compelling force. In the late Ch’ing the adaptability of the mu-fu institution and its latent professionalism bore fruit by responding to new demands for specialization.

54 It seems to me that Folsom has failed to do justice to this dual potential inhering in the mu-fu. He has recognized the adaptability of the mu-fu system in the context of the rigid bureaucratic system, but he has not explicitly distinguished the complexities within the mu-fu tradition itself. Viewing the mu-fu as a relatively homogeneous entity, therefore, has apparently given rise to many of the perplexities in his treatment of the institution. In particular, see Folsom, 95–96; and also 39, 195.

55 Chang Ch’un-ming, 31–32.

56 PCCP, 55:12b–13a.
The Recruitment of Talent

The nature of its function demanded that the traditional mu-fu emphasize the character of the men it recruited to its ranks. To the degree that the success of an official's career rested on the ability and judgment of his secretaries, his selection of talent was critical. Rather strict criteria, often conceived in terms of the traditional Chinese concept of the mean, were applied to the personal character of a secretary.\(^1\) If he were especially aggressive, he would tend to be too obstinate and uncompromising; but if his personality was weak, he would be too easily influenced by others. But if a choice between the two poles had to be made, the aggressive man was preferable, for he possessed the courage of his convictions and could be relied upon. It was for this, after all, that one employed private secretaries.

Any conscientious official, then, was bound to give considerable thought to the selection of the men who worked under him. Traditionally, the recruitment of talent was the basis for all other activities: if only the personnel of any office were properly chosen, the organization could be expected practically to run itself. This goal corresponded to the fondest dreams of officials imbued with the Confucian tradition. In their view the traditional Chinese polity was a government of men, not a government of laws. It was men who made and controlled laws. Laws could not, or should not, control men. They, instead, were governed by something higher, the moral order with its social and psychological manifestations.\(^2\)

Actually, of course, legal constraints were an important element of the Chinese political and social system, and they bore heavily on the public careers of officials in the Ch'ing.\(^3\) The eminence of the legal secretary in the mu-fu is additional evidence of the importance of law in administration. Nonetheless, the humanistic conception of political activity continued to exert a powerful influence on officials into the nineteenth century. A perfectly marvelous efficacy was attributed to the judicious and able selection of men—talent was everything.\(^4\)

This abiding faith in the efficacy of the proper selection of talent became all the more emphatic in the persisting crisis, within and without,

\(^1\) CSWP, I, 650.
\(^3\) See Chap. II, n. 29.
\(^4\) For an example of the persistence of this stereotyped view into the present, see Ch'en Ch'î-t'ien, *Tseng Kuo-fan p'ing-luan yao-chih* [The Essentials of Tseng Kuo-fan's Suppression of the Rebellion] (Taipei: 1967), 27–28.
which challenged the Ch'ing dynasty through the nineteenth century.\(^5\) Biographical writings for the period dote on the idea of talent: its discovery, appreciation, and employment. Nothing seems to provide a better occasion for verbal hand-wringing and remorse than the loss of talent through premature death, unavoidable circumstance, or ineptness on the part of those seeking it.\(^6\) Possibly more than ever before, talent was a precious commodity. Not only was there an increased demand for personnel both on the part of the regular government institutions (loss of life in the Taiping Rebellion was a significant factor) and on the part of the new irregular organizations such as the militia forces, but a demand for new types of personnel was emerging in response to new problems related to foreign affairs and modernization in the nineteenth century. The issue then became what kind of talent was most desirable and how to recruit it.

**Tseng Kuo-fan's Use of Men**

For Tseng Kuo-fan, no less than for any other official, the recruitment of talent was the foremost problem requiring attention.\(^7\) Tseng himself was imbued with the traditional view of the efficacy of talent: "Presumably, this being a government of men and not a government of laws, if the men are correctly obtained, then military funds will steadily become more abundant."\(^8\) The search for capable personnel to staff his increasingly complex military and fiscal operations demanded unceasing effort on the part of Tseng as well as his subordinates.\(^9\) The biographies of the men who passed through Tseng's service frequently testify to the success of these efforts. Many of these biographers, it is true, are the successful ones and usually wrote from this viewpoint. But this observation does not negate the remarkable official success of so many persons whose careers received their impetus under Tseng. One has only to consult a list of high officials of the late nineteenth century to discover the names of many of Tseng's former secretaries.\(^10\) In retrospect his enterprise became singularly notable for this one achievement: the use of men.

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\(^5\) Mary Wright, 68–69.
\(^6\) Cf. HPCC & PCCP, *passim*.
\(^7\) Tseng's diary for the period 5 April 1845 to 17 July 1858—possibly the most important source for his initial recruiting of subordinates—is lost. Official memorials submitted by Tseng during this period, by the very official character which pervades their content, contain little useful information in this regard. Hail, who relied mainly on such material for his study, thus has practically nothing to say about Tseng's personal *mu-fu* organization or his subordiantes generally. Chao Lieh-wen, whose diary is the other principal "intimate" source for this subject, joined Tseng only much later.
\(^10\) See, for instance, Yen Mao-kung, ed., *Ch'ing-tai cheng-hsien lei-pien* [A Classified List of High Officials of the Ch'ing Period] (2 vols.; Taipei: 1966). Also,
In his ability to recognize talent, Tseng Kuo-fan exhibited the mark of ideal political virtue according to the traditional formulation. Tseng was widely respected and admired among his contemporaries for his appreciation of men's character, a reputation which not only assured for him excellent reviews by subsequent historians, but also stood him in good stead in enlisting support for the job of suppressing the Taiping Rebellion:

At the beginning of the Hsien-feng reign [1851–1861] war rose in the empire. Although the treasury was exhausted, it was insufficient to support the armies, so that taxes on commerce were devised. Tseng Kuo-fan was particularly famous for his ability in recognizing talent, which coursed to him as spokes to the hub of a wheel. All those whose capacities he measured and employed were chosen from the literati; he did not rely on officials. The abundance of such men employed in both public and private spheres allowed his army to flourish without want.\textsuperscript{11}

A part of his reputed virtue was his humility and modesty with respect to talent, both the inadequacy of his own and the worth of other men's.\textsuperscript{12} It was expected, as a matter of course, that officials in their reports to the throne would denigrate their own abilities. Official disclaimers of ability may have been pro forma, yet in Tseng's case they reflected a real disposition to rely on others. To dominate and thus to eclipse the men he chose for various tasks would have defeated his purpose. This is not to suggest that he did not constantly have his fingers on the pulse of his operation, to which his diary ceaselessly testifies. But he was able to heed advice from, and to delegate authority to, his capable subordinates.

The attraction of good and capable men was only one side of the coin. The cultivation and effective employment of these men was equally necessary. Not unexpectedly, Tseng was if anything even more accomplished in this practical application of talent. As one of his erstwhile private secretaries described it, this was truly the brilliant art of a great statesman:

Down to recent times the rejection of practical experience and the prizing of examination degrees repeatedly became a precedent confining outstanding men, as a narrow avenue of advancement. Only Tseng Kuo-fan, in meeting the crisis of the age, made excellent talent the means of quelling and settling troubles. Selecting it, he was like a great carpenter: from blocks for printing and fine woods to odds and ends of scraps, there were none that he did not collect. Forming it, first he measured it with standard rules, next he chiselled and shaped it, and finally he rubbed and polished its grain. Using


\textsuperscript{12} TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 32, 33.
it, then as pillar, rafter, eave, joist, hinge, threshold, bolt, and wedge, all positioned in the best manner, each man went forth as he had intended. Thus it was that he was able to turn Heaven’s axis and change the customs of the age.13

Tseng Kuo-fan, engaged in the very battle for survival of his culture as he knew it, was not prepared to leave the cultivation of talent to mere chance. In fact (as noted in Chapter VI), Tseng’s mu-fu became an active agency for the training and deployment of talent in his organization.

THE PROBLEM OF RECALCITRANT TALENT

To his contemporaries who shared his ideals, Tseng Kuo-fan’s evident greatness of character was itself a point of attraction for talent:

There were living in his military headquarters at least two hundred officials, gathered there from all parts of the empire, for various objects and purposes. Besides his secretaries, who numbered no less than a hundred, there were expectant officials, learned scholars, lawyers, mathematicians, astronomers and machinists; in short, the picked and noted men of China were all drawn there by the magnetic force of his character and great name.14

It would be incorrect to infer, however, that the recruitment of talent was always as effortless as it may have seemed in retrospect. Some prospects, despite the magnetic attraction of Tseng’s character, were reluctant to serve in any capacity.

Of one of his secretaries, Tseng once lamented: “How ironic! This man may not be moved as a subordinate, and cannot be moved as a guest!” 15 Here was the fundamental dilemma in enlisting recalcitrant individuals in the cause—outright coercion was inappropriate and polite invitation unavailing. This problem, which reflected the basic ambivalence between mutual friendship and functional subordination in the secretary’s relationship to his patron, haunted Tseng’s recruitment efforts.

For many prospects, all that was required to move them was the polite formality of an invitation. Others remained aloof. It sometimes happened that such aloofness enhanced public regard for the man. This was the case for Fan T’ai-heng whose gravity and reluctance in the face of keen competition for his talent made him all the more desirable.16 Tseng wrote several letters to Fan at the capital, asking Fan to join him, but was firmly refused. When Fan had returned home to mourn the

14 Yung Wing, 148.
15 HPCC, 45:16b.
16 Fan T’ai-heng, a native of Lung-ch’ang, Szechwan, served in lesser central and provincial posts. HPCC, 44:11a–b.
death of his father, Tseng sent a messenger carrying a letter and a gift of money to Fan, who was finally moved to come out of mourning and serve. The acquaintance of literati of this type was widely cultivated. Like Fang Po-t'ang, they might lend a hand only from a feeling of duty in a crisis or as a mark of esteem for like-minded Confucian officials such as Tseng Kuo-fan or Hu Lin-i.17 Fang, for one, made a point of refusing to serve in any position that he considered too rustic.16

The most important group of recalcitrant individuals, because it included the kind of men in whom Tseng was most interested personally, was that of the literati and scholars who regarded an active military or political life as an unwanted diversion from their real purposes. Since he was himself rather reluctant at times, Tseng appreciated these men's distaste for an active career. But he also desired their company as it helped alleviate the unpleasantness of his own task.

Unfortunately, one can only speculate on what fears may have influenced some potential recruits to hold back. In the beginning, some may have regarded Tseng's enterprise as dangerously insecure; even worse, from their point of view, as his organization developed, the possible political implications may have repelled others.19

Even where a strong personal bond existed, Tseng was not always able to prevail against an obstinate disinclination for an active political career. Thus, although Liu Hsiang had been a student of Tseng in Peking and had greatly respected and admired his teacher, later (in 1860) he refused a summons to serve in Tseng's mu-fu; this in spite of the fact that Tseng dispatched Li Hung-chang and Li Yuan-tu, two of the biggest names in his organization, to persuade him.20

Some men did serve against their true inclinations. Lo Hsüan was one. Drafted by Tseng in 1854 to prepare documents in his mu-fu, he was thereafter in constant attendance on Tseng, often through extreme danger and hardship, ever ready with his brush to take dictation.21 But at

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17 Fang Po-t'ang was a native of T'ung-ch'eng, Anhwei. HPCC, 80:21b–22a.
18 HPCC, 80:22a.
19 See Chap. VII.
20 Liu Hsiang was a native of Nan-feng, Kiangsi. He had thoroughly imbibed Tseng's teachings, to the point that he was known to be disinterested in fame or personal advantage, a factor which ironically may have reinforced his refusal. HPCC, 81:4b–5a. There seems to be an implicit feeling among the biographers of the men of this period, writing as they were with the benefit of hindsight, that no one in his right mind would refuse a summons from Tseng Kuo-fan. After all, they reasoned, look at the careers to which such a summons could lead! In the case of Liu Hsiang, his biographer, perversely "rubbing it in," makes the point that all the others who served under Tseng were rewarded by having their names splashed on the pages of history, while only Liu was content to fill out his life teaching. One suspects that the biographer does not really believe this supposed contentment, for he attributes Liu's refusal of Tseng's summons to the misconstruction of Tseng's meaning by his emissaries. HPCC, 81:5a.
21 Lo Hsüan was a native of Hsiang-t'an, Hunan. In one instance, Tseng intended to commit suicide following a defeat in battle. Lo Hsüan and Li Yuan-tu
heart Lo had a strong preference for the quieter life of a scholar and wished to continue his studies for the examinations. He obtained leave from Tseng to return home, but as peace at this time was impossible, he was never free from demand.

Accomplished scholars most attracted Tseng. Wu Min-shu was a much sought-after literatus noted for his *ku-wen* scholarship. Tseng Kuo-fan, a principal advocate of this literary school, was particularly keen on *ku-wen* scholars, and he regarded Wu as outstanding in this respect. But although they formed a sincere friendship, he was unsuccessful in enlisting Wu directly into the services of his *mu-fu*. Like many such scholar acquaintances of Tseng’s, Wu never occupied more than a peripheral position with respect to the more formal parts of Tseng’s organization: these were free spirits, drifting in and out of his headquarters—brilliant literary lights, but not the serious drones of Tseng’s operation. Accompanying Tseng for awhile, Wu would tell stories from the past and attentively inquire about military problems; but when pressed to participate seriously, he would depart.

Mo Yu-chih was another of these unhampered literati, to whom Tseng was drawn by his scholarly interest. They met quite by accident in a bookstore in 1847, and chanced to bring up the subject of *ku-wen*. Upon learning that his new friend was from Kweichow (a poor southern province), Tseng exclaimed: “Can there really be this kind of ancient learning in Kweichow?!” Although they became fast friends then and there, Mo never remained long with Tseng.

Such men as these added to the brilliance of Tseng’s retinue and served him in a personal capacity, but it is questionable whether they were important to Tseng’s organization in any functional way. They were not specialists in any sense. Approached as friends, they remained equals—not subordinates. Recruitment of specialists for the sake of their particular competence alone would require a different approach. Consequently, to the degree that specialists were increasingly sought, two contrasting approaches to talent emerged. In practice these two approaches were frequently combined, just as the relationships of equality and subordination coexisted in the *mu-fu*. But with the expansion of Tseng’s organization the contrast became more explicit.

(his biographer, a colleague at this time) forcefully carried Tseng to a small boat and in the night escaped to safety across the river amid the glare and din of the battle’s aftermath. HPCC, 63a: 1a, 2a.

22 Wu Min-shu, *chin-shih* 1844, was a native of Pa-ling, Hunan. HPCC, 80:4a, 5a. The *ku-wen* style, at which he was adept, was an ancient literary form popular in the Ch’ing, often characterized by balanced structure and formalistic emphasis, and particularly propounded by Tseng Kuo-fan.

23 HPCC, 80:4a-6a.

24 Mo Yu-chih, *chü-jen* 1831, was a native of Tu-shan, Kweichow. HPCC, 79:17a-b.

25 *Ibid*.

26 HPCC, 79:19a.
METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

In discussing Tseng Kuo-fan's methods of recruitment, it must be understood from the beginning that they were essentially ad hoc. Various means were employed, but taken together these did not amount to a systematic effort. Moreover, with one exception noted further on, Tseng's recruitment lacked any institutional formulation.

The various routes by which talent was brought to Tseng may be delineated as follows:

1. **Tseng's initiative.** We have seen already that Tseng was an aggressive recruiter. He invited, summoned, and cajoled men whose reputations he had noted or whose characters he had personally observed, to serve in one or another capacity. Writing letters and memoranda, making lists of prospects, and interviewing personnel occupied a significant portion of his regular activities.

Tseng's early acquaintances were an important source of his first recruits. Liu Jung and Kuo K'un-tao, for instance, were his closest advisors in the early years of his operations, based on their previous friendship with him. Later his closest followers were men who came to him by other routes.

Besides the attractions of Tseng's character and his brilliant following of sympathetic literati, Tseng could and did use other active lures. We may recall, in the case of Fan T'ai-heng noted above, that he responded to Tseng's invitation after Tseng had sent him a gift of money. Such material inducements to serve in Tseng's organization were not taken by their recipients as dishonorable bribes (Tseng was no cynical buyer of souls), and these were all men of integrity that he was interested in. One of Tseng's better-known secretaries, Ch'en Shih-chieh, was the recipient of Tseng's generosity and assistance when they were acquaintances in Peking in 1851. Chronically in need of money, Ch'en was unable to return home upon the death of his father: Tseng helped him out. Later, in 1853, when Tseng was ordered to raise militia to fight the Taipings, he called on Ch'en's services. No doubt the latter had not forgotten their earlier friendship, for while he was still in mourning, he yielded to Tseng's blandishments to become a confidential advisor.

2. **Direct approach to Tseng.** A less common route by which talent came to him was the direct approach to Tseng of persons seeking service under him. Liu Jui-fen, for instance, approached him in Anhwei in

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27 For these two men, see Chap. IV.
28 Ch'en Shih-chieh, native of Kuei-yang, Hunan, was a promising but indigent student at Peking at the time. HPCC, 29:18b-19a.
29 *Ibid.* The requirement of the mourning period, which was twenty-seven months for a parent, was frequently an obstacle to the full utilization of talent. Tseng Kuo-fan himself was reluctant to heed orders of the Court and organize militia in Hunan during his mourning for his mother in 1852.
1860 with some timely plan, for which Tseng regarded him as quite remarkable and subsequently used him.30 Similarly, Hsueh Fu-ch’eng submitted a lengthy document on his own initiative in response to Tseng’s summons for worthy and capable men. Tseng found this exceptional and invited Hsueh to join his staff. Here he assisted in critical military planning and became a star in the later period of Tseng’s mu-fu.31 Both Liu Jui-fen and Hsueh Fu-ch’eng were launched from this beginning into important diplomatic careers.32 When Tseng was ordered in early 1853 to organize local militia in Hunan, Li Yuan-tu anonymously wrote a long letter to him.33 Having discovered the identity of the author, Tseng subsequently interviewed him, ascertained his experience, and used Li in military planning. Personal connections apparently played no part in influencing Tseng in this process.

(3) Taiping defections. As an unofficial institution the mu-fu also offered opportunity for service to Taiping defectors. Although this was probably not a quantitatively significant route of recruitment, Tseng made conscious efforts to encourage such defections.34 While of course these efforts were motivated in part by purely military considerations of weakening the enemy, nevertheless there was another significant practical effect:

This class of men, from their previous service in the Taiping army, were fully cognizant of the true situation within the Taipings. After they returned to allegiance, having at heart fully atoned for their crime, they exerted exceptional energy and repeatedly exhibited unusual merit. This was considered to be converting the enemy’s strength to one’s own ends. If at the time of submission there had been no mu-fu to receive and collect such persons, so that they must instead rely on regular channels of official employment, they would have been irresolute and reluctant. Not only would the door to submission have been blocked, but the pent-up frustrations of wild beasts would have arisen among them.35

Perhaps the most distinguished example of such recruitment from the very ranks of the enemy, is Ch’eng Hsueh-ch’i, who after serving the Taipings, defected and thereafter served as a brilliantly successful commander under both Tseng Kuo-ch’üan and Li Hung-chang.36

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30 Liu Jui-fen was a native of Kuei-chih, Anhwei. HPCC, 32:7a–b.
31 Hsueh Fu-ch’eng was a native of Wu-hsi, Kiangsu. PCCP, 13:1a.
32 Hummel, 331-332, 522-523.
33 Li Yuan-tu, chii-jen 1848, was a native of P’ing-chiang, Hunan. HPCC, 39:1a-b.
35 Miao Ch’uan-chi, “Tseng Kuo-fan mu-fu sheng-k’uang yü wan-Ch’ing ti-fang-ch’üan-li chih pien-hua” [The Flourishing of Tseng Kuo-fan’s Mu-fu and the Development of Late Ch’ing Regional Authority], Chung-shan hsüeh-shu wen-hua chi-k’an (Taipei), 4 (November 1969), 331.
36 Ch’eng Hsueh-ch’i was a native of T’ung-ch’eng, Anhwei. HPCC 51:16a. See also Hummel, 115-116.
(4) **Personal recommendation.** This was certainly the most important route in Tseng’s recruitment of talent. Personal connections were the normal basis for entrance into the *mu-fu* system. In times of crisis, when talent was more urgently sought, personal connections naturally were exploited as leads to recruitment.

Tseng formalized the recommendation process so far as to order the gentry and people of Liang-Kiang to recommend talent when he became Governor-General there in 1860.\(^{37}\) Of course, this means of obtaining personnel had a tradition dating back as far as the Han or before.\(^{38}\) Usually the names of prospects came to him through the recommendations of subordinates or the good word of friends (sometimes for their own relatives).

Li Hung-chang brought his old friend Ch’ên Ai to Tseng’s attention in this manner.\(^{39}\) Escaping the Taipings, Ch’ên found himself at Ch’i-men, Anhwei, where Tseng had located his headquarters in 1860. Ch’ên paid a visit to Li, who subsequently spoke of him to Tseng. The very next day as they again were together, Li said to Ch’ên: “Tseng is avidly searching for scholars. You have executive ability (*fu kan-lueh*), but with an aged mother, are you then to count yourself among the refugees?” He had not finished speaking when Tseng pulled back the curtain and entered. Tseng, having bowed very respectfully to Ch’ên, sat and proceeded to examine him in rigorous detail on military planning. Consequently he detained him in his *mu-fu*, and Ch’ên, unable to decline, tearfully lamented: “As my mother is old I really cannot bear to abandon her day or night—this distress is unendurable.” “Assuredly you will not be bowed by this distress, now just when military problems are so complicated,” Tseng challenged him.\(^{40}\) Not willing to let a prize catch off the hook, Tseng was successfully adamant.

Ch’ên Ai in turn recommended his friend and “classmate” Chang Hsi-jung to Tseng when Chang visited him at Tseng’s camp at An-ch’ing in 1863.\(^{41}\) At the same time, Chang had also called on Tseng, but not finding him at home, had left his card. Later, Tseng questioned Ch’ên Ai about him: “I have heard of Chang’s personality, that his conduct is unreasonable. How would you describe him?” After Ch’ên had described his character at length, Tseng noted: “Since you are his close friend,

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\(^{38}\) For the formalized use of recommendation in the Han, see Franklin W. Houn, “The Civil Service Recruitment System of the Han Dynasty,” *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, I (1956), 139–148.

\(^{39}\) Ch’ên Ai, a native of Shih-tai, Anhwei, returned home to teach and support his mother during the rise of the Taiping Rebellion. HPCC, 45:16a.

\(^{40}\) HPCC, 45:16a.

\(^{41}\) Chang Hsi-jung, *chü-jen* 1852, *chin-shih* 1853, a native of Ling-pi, Anhwei, who entered the Han-lin Academy, was a *kung-sheng* student of the same year as Ch’ên Ai (1849). PCCP, 32:26a, 27a.
what you say of him naturally must be accurate." The next day Tseng went with a retinue of followers to return Chang's visit. From this introduction there resulted a long and successful association.

A possibly dubious advantage derived from the self-perpetuating character of the personal recommendation process, which these two examples illustrate. To the extent that it brought more people to Tseng's notice, it facilitated recruitment. But it must also have risked encouraging the formation of cliques among secretaries. Apparently this problem did not arise for Tseng. But evidence for this sort of phenomenon is very elusive. The most one can say is that no evidence exists indicating the formation of cliques among Tseng's secretaries. However, one factor which may have discouraged their formation was the mobile character of Tseng's operation—it was not tied to any locality or placed directly within any larger bureaucratic official hierarchy which would have encouraged the growth of cliques.

Personal ties notwithstanding, Tseng sought to maintain a direct control over the type of men he took into his service. The kind of interview that Tseng gave Ch'en Ai, described above, was the most important form of review that he exercised over the selection of talent. This was an examination of the subject's character and ability, ultimately based on standards other than those of personal ties, which could confirm or correct the impression derived from other sources, including personal recommendations. Tseng used the interview in another way—for the review (for purposes of grading and promotion) of his junior military officers. And, while his standards for judgment may not always have been objective, they were systematic and regular.

From Chao Lieh-wen's account of his interview with Tseng in 1861, one acquires a more satisfactory insight into the nature of Tseng's interviews than the traditionally laconic biographies reveal. They discussed the administration of the salt monopoly at some length. Then,

The Commander asked about barbarian affairs, so I replied with all I knew of them. Again he brought up the general situation of the empire, and I suggested that trained militia ought to be relied on. The Commander was of the opinion that militia were not appropriate for handling the present rebels. When we came to discuss means of restoration of the situation, he only frowned.

Later Chao sent Tseng a couple of "barbarian books"—Chao was par-

42 PCCP, 32:27a.
43 PCCP, 32:28b.
44 For the differences between Tseng's organization and the official bureaucracy in this regard, see Chap. V.
45 See Chap. V for a discussion of these interviews.
46 Chao Lieh-wen was a native of Yang-hu, Kiangsu. PCCP, 26:1a.
ticularly known as an expert on foreign affairs. Clearly this interview was a grave matter, touching on subjects with which Tseng was actively concerned.

Evaluation based on interviews, and on a person’s experience and writings, provided a more rational foundation for the selection of personnel than purely personal connections could do. After all, it was practical experience and competence that interested Tseng, qualifications which personal connections could not guarantee, though the latter certainly might assist in bringing talent to light. To handle the multifarious problems which arose in his operations, Tseng required a large and diverse staff, for the selection of which considerations of character, competence, and knowledge were preeminent. He could not afford to let these crucial factors be eclipsed by personal ties.

**INDOCTRINATION OR EXPERTISE?**

A basic problem in China’s modernization has been the tension between the orientations of the generalist and the specialist—or between virtue and ability. Under the challenge of a competitive Western culture and the Taiping assault on the Confucian tradition, ideological and cultural commitment acquired a new urgency. At the same time, the need for meeting the West’s material impact and suppressing the Taiping Rebellion brought a demand for technical competence. Which did Tseng Kuo-fan value most: ideological commitment or technical proficiency? Indeed, was this choice possible for him?

The civil war interrupted many promising careers of study for the civil

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48 "Rational" activity is to be understood here in the Weberian sense, as action based on knowledge and characterized by impersonality. See also Chap. VII, n. 15.

49 At this point it is necessary to say a word about the use of the term "ideology" in the present study. Although admittedly a highly charged word, I have gained courage for my application of the term from an apparent lack of any consensus on its definition. In its basic sense, "ideology" means "a systematic scheme or coordinated body of ideas or concepts esp. about human life or culture" (Weber's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, 1967, 1123), or, a form of "comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about man, society, and the universe in relation to man and society" (Edwards Shils, "The Concept and Function of Ideology," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968, VII, 66). Ideology may involve distortion: "Ideology consists of selected or distorted ideas about a social system or a class of social systems when these ideas purport to be factual, and also carry a more or less explicit evaluation of the 'facts'" (Harry M. Johnson, "Ideology and the Social System," ibid., 77).

Specifically, two points must be made concerning the term "ideology:"

1. "Ideology" may have a neutral, not a pejorative sense: "A schematic image of social order" (Johnson, quoting Clifford Geertz, ibid., 76).

2. "Ideology" and "science" (or "technology") are sometimes regarded as antithetical, especially in the Marxist sense. See Julius Gould & William L. Kolb, eds., A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (New York: 1964), 316.

Although these two points are somewhat contradictory, the term as I will use it includes elements of each sense: not strongly pejorative (especially not involving the pathological distortion which Shils elaborates in his article); and as a polar concept with science or technology. Thus ideology may be seen as a rubric for a
service examinations and service at the capital. Candidates returned home to organize defense, or to support and protect their families during the crisis. Having abandoned official careers in this way, work with private organizations and various unofficial efforts ultimately became an alternative means of public service for such persons. They thus formed a ready-made reservoir of talent. One problem facing Tseng Kuo-fan, therefore, was how to tap this potentially valuable source of hidden talent. It was largely with this object in mind that, as part of his active search for support, Tseng appealed to this amorphous group:

If there are any resolute young men who respond to the summons for patriotic volunteers to help our campaign, this office will amply provide emoluments. If there are any superior men who, cherishing the Way and pained by the depredations of China by the Christian religion, are angrily aroused to protect our Way, this office will receive them into its mu-fu and treat them as honored teachers.50

But such persons might nevertheless perish at the hands of the enemy, upholding their traditions yet unhonored by the nation for their loyalty. Tseng was painfully aware of the sacrifice of worthy men in this great domestic upheaval, and of the debt owed to them by his whole class:

My virtue is slim and my abilities few. I rely only on the two principles of loyalty and truth as the basis for leading the army on the march. Above are the sun and the moon. Below are the demons and the spirits. For the quick there are the vast waters of the Long River. Among the dead there are the souls of the loyal officials and ardent scholars who have already died for their country.51

The lament for departed martyrs could be much more than a mere formality by which to salve one’s grief at their loss. If such fine figures of loyalty and public spirit should pass unrecruited in their time, at least they might inspire others. If only their stories could be brought to light, they could serve as paradigms of the resolution and character that was required by the crisis at hand.52 In the Confucian tradition the emulation system (or systems) of cultural and moral traditions, in contrast to scientific and technological systems.

Seen in this way, including the basic definitions given above, Confucianism may be regarded as an ideology. I have somewhat freely (but aptly, I think) equated ming-chiao, in the passage quoted from Tseng and later on, with “ideology.” Wilhelm translates this term (his “slogan”) as “civilization.” It means approximately “the morality inhering in the social relationships, and the teachings of the sages. See Tz’u-yuan (Taipei, 1968), 270; Kuo-yü tz’u-tien (Taipei, 1966), 384; Moro-hashi, Dai Kanwa jiten, II, 827.

51 Ibid., 149.
52 The kind of persons which the biographers glorified for their loyalty and public spirit included the following:

Tso Shu-te, when the Taipings invaded his village, obstinately guarded his family grave, though all his neighbors had fled into hiding. The rebels were so
of virtuous models was part of the educational process, a means to inculcate virtuous behavior. The glorification of worthy and virtuous men could be a practical process of indoctrination in this manner, to instill in others the same ideals which had motivated them.

Tseng consequently established a kind of ideological organization, the “Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit.” His purpose was two-fold: to honor the memory of public heroes who might otherwise pass into oblivion; and to encourage, by these examples, similar sterling qualities in other men. The appearance of Ch'en Ai inspired Tseng to formulate this systematic approach to indoctrination.

Tseng Kuo-fan had particularly devoted serious thought to the manner and influence of able men. Without relying on their spirit of loyalty and public spirit it would be impossible to suppress the degenerate customs of the age and extirpate the root of rebellion. Now, finding Ch'en Ai, he was extremely pleased, and decided that in the villages and towns that had suffered the calamity of the rebels, there still must be many who had not met death. Ch'en, as a high-principled man, could serve to gather together and inquire into these persons, not only to make manifest those who had died, so that none might be forgotten, but also with the hope that more such fine men might be discovered. Ch'en consequently did not decline to serve, and the establishment of the Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit resulted from this.

It is tempting to view this office as having the practical objective of scouting talent. The sources are not clear on this point, however. There is very little information on how the office was organized and operated. Tseng’s formal memorials on the subject of the “Loyalty Office” stress its function of glorifying martyrs who died fighting the Taipings. To extract the maximum benefit from these models of public virtue, it was necessary to have authoritative sanction. Only the Court could provide

moved by this demonstration of filial piety that they brought him food and money, but he refused them all. Finally, they departed with sighs, sparing the houses of the village from burning because they did not want to harm the place where such a filial son resided. HPCC, 82:10b–11a.

Hu Tse-shun, a district Sub-Director of Studies in Anhwei when the Taipings took An-ch'ing in 1853, had said that in time of great crisis one could only hold fast to the principles of loyalty and public spirit. He believed that to protect his village and requite his nation were included in his official duties, and he applied his teaching to his family as well as to himself as a responsibility. HPCC, 63:18a.


Hu Tse-shun, a district Sub-Director of Studies in Anhwei when the Taipings took An-ch'ing in 1853, had said that in time of great crisis one could only hold fast to the principles of loyalty and public spirit. He believed that to protect his village and requite his nation were included in his official duties, and he applied his teaching to his family as well as to himself as a responsibility. HPCC, 63:18a.


Ts'ai-fang chung-i chü. I have rather freely, and possibly tendentiously, translated ts'ai-fang (literally, “to collect” and “to inquire into”) as “promotion.” The literal translation for chung is “loyalty.” But i, translated here as “public spirit,” has a complexity of meanings, including “moral sense” or “sense of fitting duty.” Cf. ibid., 51.

the posthumous honors which would recommend them as examples to the nation. The "Loyalty Office" may also have been intended to attract public-spirited individuals to Tseng's cause, through the indoctrination provided by the emulation of virtuous models.

The establishment of the "Loyalty Office" reflected Tseng's concern for moral and ideological commitment. In order to "suppress the degenerate customs of the age and extirpate the root of rebellion" it was essential to enlist the support of those individuals who were uncontaminated by this malaise and still held fast to the traditional values of public morality and responsibility. Tseng was quite disturbed by this degenerate character of the times. In a conversation one evening with his friend Wu Chia-pin, they discussed the principles of study. To "hear the Tao in the morning and die [contented] in the evening," as the saying went, was certainly not a simple achievement, Tseng suggested. Those who hear the Tao must not only have true knowledge but also sincere faith to benefit thereby. "If those of my generation are without self-confidence in the first place, and if their minds already lack discipline, how can they hear the Tao?," Tseng asked rhetorically.57

Especially where recruitment of support was involved, he was concerned with the decline in character evidenced by his own class.58 To them he eloquently appealed:

From the time of Emperors Yao and Shun and the Three Dynasties until now, through successive generations the sages have sustained our ideology and esteemed the social relationships. The positions of lord and subject, father and son, high and low, honored and common, are as orderly and inconvertible as cap and shoe. But the bandits of Yueh, taking their clue from the outer barbarians, venerate the religion of God. From their bogus lords and ministers down to their soldiers and mean people, all are called brother. They say only Heaven is called father. Besides this, all the people's fathers are all brothers and all the people's mothers are all sisters. Farmers are unable to freely cultivate in order to pay taxes, as they call all the fields the fields of the Heavenly King. Merchants are unable to freely trade in order to seek profit, as they call all the merchandise the merchandise of the Heavenly King. Scholars are unable to recite the Confucian Classics as they have other theories of a so-called Jesus and the New Testament. All of China's several thousand years of propriety, morality, and social relationships, of literature and law, are suddenly dragged in the dust and utterly destroyed. How can this be only a change in our Ch'ing Dynasty? It is the most extraordinary transformation in our ideology since its creation, for which our Confucius and Mencius weep in their graves. How can any literate man

57 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 632.
still sit quietly with his hands in his sleeves and not think of doing something?\textsuperscript{59}

It is only natural that he should have cast his statement of the crisis in ideological form. But the spirit pervading this appeal, with its sense of cultural and moral commitment, illuminating Tseng’s whole conception of his task and his inspiration for the creation of the “Loyalty Office,” raises an important question. How did practical experience and competence as a criterion for the selection of talent fit into this context?

In the traditional polity which Tseng was staunchly defending, the Confucian generalist with his moral orientation was the all-important political actor. Specialists occupied a secondary place in this system.\textsuperscript{60} Because Tseng shared these traditional assumptions concerning political activity, he could at least be expected to exploit such expertise. He certainly found it important to employ specialists in his operations; but it seems that for him the critical factor in the effective rectification of this great crisis in the old order was the mobilization of other indoctrinated, public-spirited generalists.

Yet I have already suggested that Tseng had a pragmatic interest in recruiting men with practical experience and competence. Ideological indoctrination could not elicit expertise. How essential were the actual ideals embodied by the models of virtuous character which were sought and presented for emulation by the “Loyalty Office”? Were those same ideals expressed in his high-sounding summons really, after all, his ultimate concern in the promotion of talent? In fact, there were two competing themes in Tseng’s approach to enlisting men’s support: ideological virtue, and technical proficiency. These remained unarticulated for Tseng.

\textsuperscript{59} TWCKCC, “\textit{Wen-chi},” 147–148.
\textsuperscript{60} See Chap. VII for a further discussion of this problem.
IV
In Tseng Kuo-fan's Mu-fu

The mu-fu institution in general and Tseng Kuo-fan's mu-fu in particular, characteristically tolerated a considerable diversity of personalities and interests. No uniformity produced by some inflexible standard of behavior is apparent among his followers. Of course, there were long-standing traditional criteria, as well as modern exigencies (some noted in the preceding chapter), which affected the sort of men recruited for mu-fu service. Given the personal corruption which was a salient feature of the regular official bureaucracy and which sometimes infected the irregular mu-fu institution, some kind of screening of prospective secretaries was desirable.¹ Such screening was meant to ensure an integrity of personal moral character, but did not preclude a good measure of eccentricity among the members of Tseng's staff. Tseng welcomed self-reliance and independence of thought.

Included in Tseng's immediate retinue were friends, companions, students, advisors, military officers, and delegates to satellite or parallel organizations and offices, plus a staff of lesser orderlies, adjutants, messengers, guards, clerks, and servants of various descriptions. With the exception of this lesser staff which constituted a more permanently established group, these people were not constantly all under one roof, nor did they continuously follow Tseng on his campaigns. In fact, a large part of his regular correspondence was with these men. Some drifted in and out of his company, others were steadily in attendance. But there were no clearly defined limits to this group and no precise distinctions existed between, for instance, companions and advisors. This is not to say that no distinctions existed at all—personal and familial relationships between Tseng and some of his followers did exist.² But such ties did not become a basis for a clear mechanical organization of priorities or functions. Without fixed location, size, duration of service, or functional hierarchy, this "inner mu-fu" of Tseng's was informal and unstructured.

The term "inner mu-fu" will be used here to describe the loose congregation of friends, advisors, and consultants who were the most impor-

¹ One can hardly pick up a book on the political history of traditional China without reading about official corruption. Hsiao Kung-chuan, Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960) conveys a monotonous impression of local official corruption, and Ch'ü T'ung-tsu briefly discusses its extension to the mu-fu (pp. 113–115).

² For an example of marriage connections which developed between Tseng Kuo-fan and two of his followers, cf. Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 461.
tant intimates and associates on whom Tseng relied, as distinct from the 
“outer mu-fu” of lesser functionaries and attendants, who though no 
less essential, were less involved in the higher-level processes of the 
mu-fu. This dichotomy parallels a familiar conceptual polarity in Chinese 
political thought, between “inner” and “outer.” This was applied, for 
instance, to the Inner Court of intimate associates of the emperor as 
against the Outer Court of regular bureaucratic officials attached to the 
court; or to the “inner officials” (of the central government) as against 
the “outer officials” (of the provincial administrations). The emphasis 
in this chapter will be on this “essential mu-fu,” leaving the “outer mu- 
fu” and the rest of Tseng’s more structured and more formalized organi-
zation to be examined in subsequent chapters.

It should be noted that this approach differs distinctly from other 
studies of the mu-fu system. Kenneth Folsom’s definition of the mu-fu is 
very broad: in the case of Li Hung-chang he includes practically every-
one who had any personal or subordinate relationship with Li. This de-
finite is an instrument too blunt for the analysis of the manifold and 
component character of the mu-fu system, or to explain the dynamic 
growth of the institution far beyond its original scope and meaning. Such 
a broad construction masks significant differences, both quantitative and 
qualitative, between the traditional mu-fu and the sort of organization 
that developed under Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang later. Other 
treatments that have classified the members of Tseng’s mu-fu and de-
scribed their functions have given a false impression of regularity and 
structure in this inner mu-fu, and should be taken with a grain of salt. 
The lists of Tseng’s mu-yu that have been compiled by both Hsueh Fu-
ch’eng and Yü Yü-ti include men with the most tenuous relationships 
with Tseng, along with those who had a more properly functional and 
formal relationship. Both types are part of the “inner mu-fu” as defined 
here; but a proper appreciation of its amorphous character and its indis-
tinct outlines must be preserved. These characteristics are in sharp con-
trast with the formality of Tseng’s private bureaucracy. One point of this 
chapter is to elucidate the comparison, which later chapters will provide, 
between the mu-fu from which Tseng started and the elaborate apparatus 
he created.

THE INNER MU-FU

In the evening I went to Governor Lo [Ping-chang]’s place and 
talked awhile. Afterwards I conferred with Tso Chi-kao [Tso Tsung-

3 Cf. Folsom, especially 122–124.
4 Hsueh Fu-ch’eng, “Hsü Tseng-wen-cheng-kung mu-fu pin-liao” and Yü 
Yü-ti, Tseng Kuo-fan mu-fu pin-liao nien-p’u [A Chronological Account of the 
Taiwan University, 1960).

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t'ang], Liu Hsia-hsien (Liu Jung), Wang Jen-jui (?), and Kuo I-ch'eng [Kuo K'un-tao] and we came to a decision on the movement of the various detachments of troops. Made out a list of these. Also made out lists of various tasks to be apportioned, and of the boats we would need to use.⁵

Thus Tseng recorded in his diary for 23 July 1858 discussions with his staff in preparation for setting out from Ch'ang-sha, Hunan, only a few days later (29 July). This activity marked the important resumption of his personal leadership of the campaign, following his retirement in March 1857 in mourning for the death of his father. These discussions were also part of a significant process of reorganization of the whole effort under Tseng's second command, dating from this period.⁶ With the exception of Lo Ping-chang, Governor of Hunan, the men with whom he conferred were all members of his inner mu-fu.

One of the participants in these discussions, Kuo K'un-tao, exemplifies the type of man included among Tseng's consultants and advisors.⁷ Disappointed in the examination competition, he made instead a career of mu-fu service—remaining persistently disinterested in the fame of an official career, which his elder brother Kuo Sung-tao was meanwhile successfully pursuing. But Kuo gained valuable experience in military and fiscal administration in his service as a private secretary. Together with Tso Tsung-t'ang, Kuo was invited to enter the mu-fu of Chang Liang-chi, Governor of Hunan, when the Taipings invaded the province in 1852. They continued to serve Chang when he became Governor-General of Hunan and Hupeh, but when Chang was cashiered they left his service and entered the mu-fu of the new Governor of Hunan, Lo Ping-chang.⁸

Both Kuo K'un-tao and Kuo Sung-tao had been acquaintances of Tseng Kuo-fan as students in Peking in 1844.⁹ When in 1852 Tseng was ordered to raise an army to meet the Taiping invasion of Hunan, he took Kuo K'un-tao as well as his colleague Tso Tsung-t'ang into his mu-fu where they handled problems of military supply. In his subsequent service with Tseng, Kuo not only specialized in military logistics and finance, but participated in general strategic planning as well.¹⁰

Another participant in the preparations for the new campaign was Liu Jung.¹¹ Liu, although very able, was unmoved by the attractions of an official career. While still young he exhibited remarkable abilities, and

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⁵ Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 449.
⁶ Hail, 203, 208.
⁷ Kuo K'un-tao was a native of Hsiang-yin, Hunan. HPCC, 17:13b.
⁸ Ibid., 17:14a-b.
⁹ Ibid., 17:14a.
¹⁰ Ibid., 17:15b–16a. For Kuo as a steady consultant of Tseng Kuo-fan, see Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 484, 490, 555, 563–565, 569, 571, 575, 581, 582, 584, 585, 589, 594, 596.
¹¹ Liu Jung was a native of Tseng's home town Hsiang-hsiang, Hunan. HPCC 27:9a.
with his fellow townsman Tseng Kuo-fan pursued the study of the Sung Neo-Confucian philosophers. Later he was tapped by Tseng for service as an advisor on the training of militia, in which he had gained earlier experience in Hunan with Lo Ping-chang and Wang Hsin.12

Kuo K’un-tao and Liu Jung became the closest counsellors of Tseng Kuo-fan, were regularly in his attendance, and divided between them the two most important competencies. Kuo handled problems of financial administration and supply; Liu handled problems of military administration and training. These two men had both preferred the relatively anonymous career as advisor and consultant to the public attention of the official bureaucracy. Both were also mu-yu in the literal sense—friends and associates of Tseng, who relied on them for their particular ability, as well as for their judgment in general matters of policy.13 The relationship between such men and Tseng was not one of simple friendship, however. Their functional positions and special competencies were real and important, but these necessarily implied the subordination of the secretary to his patron.

The result was a subtle blending of the relationships of equality, based on friendship and early associations, and subordination, based on functional positions in Tseng’s operations. This blending is responsible for the lack of clear definition of form in this segment of Tseng’s organization. As much as any other person, for instance, Kuo K’un-tao was Tseng’s most intimate confidant. Even so, such a role was less than a wholly glamorous one of high-level policy discussions, conversation on philosophical and personal subjects, and social get-togethers with visitors and other secretaries—although these aspects were certainly not missing.14 Kuo was also constantly engaged in routine secretarial work for Tseng, including the drafting of memorials, proclamations, and letters.15 Following his departure from Tseng’s immediate company late in 1858, Kuo maintained a regular correspondence with him.16 That he was apparently still

12 Ibid.
13 Kuo K’un-tao and Liu Jung served directly with Tseng for the first few years from the beginning of his organization in 1853–1854 through most of 1858. In that year they both apparently left his immediate suite. Liu departed for home on 17 August 1858. (Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 463.) Kuo left some time shortly after 30 December 1858. Ibid., 596.
14 See, for instance, ibid., 449, 453, 542, 574, 579, 593.
15 Ibid., 447, 464, 482, 494, 517, 519, 522, 538, 550, 571. Tseng assigned Kuo K’un-tao to managing official documents, in a listing he made of the members of his retinue and their duties. Ibid., 471.
16 Ibid., 617ff. passim. It is not clear what task was engaging Kuo from this time, although he appears to have been a corresponding member of Tseng’s mu-fu. Tseng’s mention of his last recorded conversation with Kuo, of 30 December 1858, however, seems to imply that Kuo may have been quitting his service. Ibid., 596. Yü Yü-ti states that Kuo left Tseng’s service after Nanking was recovered and the Taipings were suppressed, a vagueness reflecting that of the other sources. Yü Yü-ti, 18. In any case he seems to have served more than ten years continuously as a private secretary with Tseng Kuo-fan and other officials. HPCC 17:16a.
an active member of Tseng's *mu-fu* while absent at this time also points up the flexible form of the inner *mu-fu*, and the indefinite tenure of its members.

Soon after Kuo K’un-tao departed, Tseng memorialized the court requesting the transfer to his camp of Li Jung, a minor official of the Board of Rites.\(^{17}\) Li subsequently became a constant advisor to Tseng in this later period, in part filling the vacuum left by the absence of Kuo K’un-tao.\(^{18}\) This was no exact substitution of personnel—the composition of the *mu-fu* constantly shifted as new men arrived and others departed. It was from this period also, for instance, that Li Hung-chang entered Tseng's *mu-fu*, and after Li Jung arrived a few months later (in July 1859), the two of them were joint consultants for a while, sometimes referred to by Tseng as the "two Lis."\(^{19}\)

In a sense, Li Hung-chang also took up where Kuo K’un-tao had left off, charged with the supervision of official communications.\(^{20}\) Whereas Li Hung-chang, on the strength of his earlier experience in raising militia in Anhwei, went on to become a satellite military commander under Tseng, Li Jung moved directly into the General Staff, where he served as a military planner as well as an envoy or agent.\(^{21}\) In this capacity he seems to have been a kind of troubleshooter for Tseng to be sent out to units in the field. Thus when Tseng apparently suspected the reliability of a military commander, he sent Li as a temporary joint commander of the unit, charged with overseeing communications.\(^{22}\) This sort of commission by no means made Li Jung a military commander in his own right, and he remained essentially a member of Tseng's inner personal staff. Here again, in this case of Li Jung, a practical subordinate role was mitigated by a much less definable relationship of special intimacy preserved by the inherited *mu-yu* ideal.

Much has been made of the mystique of the relationship within the *mu-fu* between the *mu-yu* and his patron. From the sense of personal friendship and equality which the term *mu-yu* connotes, the secretary has ideally been likened to a respected and honored teacher and an intimate

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\(^{17}\) Li Jung, a native of Chien-chou, Szechwan, *chü-jen* 1843, *chin-shih* 1847, entered the Board of Rites as a *chu-shih* from the Han-lin Academy. Yu Yu-ti, 24; Tseng Kuo-fan, *Diary*, 692. Tseng memorialized on 13 February 1859, and received approval from the Court for the transfer on 17 March 1859, but it was not until 2 July 1859 that Li Jung finally arrived. *Ibid.*, 619, 635, 692.

\(^{18}\) Cf. *ibid.*, 786, 790, 925. In the first example Tseng sought and subsequently followed his advice, not sending off an energetic letter he had written to Hu Lin-i, resisting the latter's repeated requests for reinforcements which could not be spared.

\(^{19}\) *Ibid.*, 710–736 *passim*, especially 727 and 736. Li Hung-chang saw Tseng on 13 January 1859 and apparently entered the *mu-fu* about that time. *Ibid.*, 603; Folsom, 82.

\(^{20}\) Folsom, 83. See *ibid.*, chap. IV for a discussion of Li Hung-chang's career as a secretary to Tseng.

\(^{21}\) Tseng Kuo-fan, *Diary*, 739, 757, 771, 775.

\(^{22}\) *Ibid.*, 797.
friend of his patron rolled into one. For a patron as extraordinary and eminent as Tseng Kuo-fan, however, any approximation to such an ideal within his own mu-fu was apt to be unusual. While he may have conformed to the polite conventions in inviting men into his service, Tseng’s scholarly credentials and prestige were clearly such that for most of his colleagues he was the point of attraction and focus of aspirations: many were his friends but few could claim to be his teachers. Those whose relationship with Tseng did approximate the traditional stereotype, therefore, are worth noting for their distinctive position and unusual role.

Ch’en Nai was just such a friend. In fact, the apparent informality and special nature of their friendship leads one to doubt whether Ch’en Nai could be made to fit into any category except that of the ideal mu-fu relationship. Practically from the moment of his arrival in Tseng’s camp in December 1859, Ch’en was frequently in Tseng’s company, referred to for his opinion or instruction on privy and public matters alike. When he was not off on some errand away from headquarters, Ch’en was a constant “chess” companion for Tseng. Sometimes he provided Tseng with advice on his health, taking his pulse or diagnosing a brief illness, or they discussed philosophical subjects such as the theories of mystic diagrams and geomancy.

The really important function that Ch’en Nai fulfilled for Tseng was to serve as a moral corrective and restraint. Of course, this essential service was also rendered to some degree by other men at various times—by such close secretaries as Kuo K’un-tao and Li Jung, for instance. But from no one else as much as Ch’en Nai is the responsible and sincere remonstrance aimed at the improvement and cultivation of one’s friend’s character, which was so much a part of the true ideal of friendship, so explicitly set forth by Tseng:

After lunch, Tso-mei [Ch’en Nai] wrote a memo urging that my memorial impeaching Tz’u-ch’ing [Li Yuan-tu] not be inappropriately harsh. Subsequently I asked him to speak to me personally. By indirection, he emphatically reiterated his entreaty. Therefore I

23 See Chapter II.
24 Hsiao I-shan states that Tseng’s leadership and eminence were already recognized by the local officials upon his arrival in Hunan in 1852, and that people flocked to his service, therefore. Hsiao I-shan, Tseng Kuo-fan chuan [Biography of Tseng Kuo-fan] (Taipei: 1952), 122. Certainly, this was all the more true as his subsequent success became famous.
25 Ch’en Nai was a native of Li-yang, Kiangsu. Hsueh Fu-ch’eng, “Hsii Tseng-wen-cheng-kung mu-fu pin-liao,” 131.
26 Ch’en Nai arrived at Tseng’s camp at Su-sung, Anhwei on 12 December 1859. Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 780. On 2 September 1859 Tseng had sent one of his orderlies to Kiangsu to invite him to come, with the gift of one hundred taels of silver travelling money. Ibid., 721.
27 The game they played (wei-ch’i) is an equivalent of the Japanese game of go. Cf. Ibid., 807, 808, 809, 810, 822, 823, 826.
28 Ibid., 783, 784, 804.
deleted several sentences from the draft of the memorial. In the evening I played a game of “chess” with Tso-mei. Afterwards we discussed at length generosity and pettiness in human nature. Study causes one to become too concerned with superficialities. Much that Tso-mei said manifested a sense of the Tao. Much of what I said was impetuous verbiage.29

Tseng Kuo-fan was deeply pained by the Li Yuan-tu affair, and consequently fell into an extended depression during which he depreciated and criticized the character of his subordinates generally.30 Several days after his remonstrance with Tseng over the memorial on Li Yuan-tu, therefore, Ch’én again found it necessary to comment on his friend’s behavior:

At dusk I had a long conversation with Tso-mei. He said that to regard everyone in the world as bad is not as productive as to regard everyone as good. To preserve a measure of encouragement and charity toward others will cause men to desire to be good. Presumably he was ridiculing my recent penchant for talking of men’s shortcomings, and regarding everyone as wrong.31

Tseng’s recognition of his companion’s earnest criticism and moral superiority in these instances reflects the Confucian tradition of mutual cultivation of character among friends which was in large part the theoretical foundation of the mu-yu relationship.32 Such an ideal relationship between friends was rarely recorded by Tseng.

There were other members of the inner mu-fu whose relationships with Tseng approached the intimate association of Tseng and Ch’èn Nai. But each tended to fulfill some unique function with respect to Tseng’s needs. Wu Chia-pin, for example, was a chin-shih “classmate” of Tseng’s who seemed to move in and out of camp rather freely—an occasional intellectual and social companion more than a practical advisor or serious functionary.33 When he was present, however, he was ubiquitously at hand, often as an intense “chess” partner, or as a literary friend discussing scholarly and philosophical subjects or meeting together with others to

29 Ibid., 953. 28 October 1860. Li Yuan-tu, commanding two battalions of Tseng’s army, had been defeated on 3 October 1860 at Ts’ung-shan pass in Hui-chou prefecture, Anhwei. Tseng at first feared he might have perished, but when he turned up unremorseful over his fault in the defeat and overconfident as well, Tseng impeached him. Ibid., 942, 945–946, 948–949, 954. For another account of this affair see Chao Lieh-wen, 621–623.
30 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 951, 954, 956. Tseng had a very high opinion of Li Yuan-tu. Ibid., 698. But even before his defeat he had begun to suspect the fatal flaws in his personality, and had admonished him in detail before sending him off on his last mission. Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 938, 939.
31 Ibid., 955. 2 November 1860.
32 “Do not form friendship with those not equal to oneself”—so that one may improve oneself by emulation as well as by the benefit offered by the other person. Lun-yü, IX:24. Cf. also I:1, 1:8.
33 Wu Chia-pin, chin-shih 1838, was a native of Nan-feng, Kiangsi. Yü Yü-ti, 20.
compose verse. As a chin-shih degree holder of the same year as Tseng, Wu could be considered as having had a privileged position among Tseng’s colleagues, yet in spite of this apparently rather relaxed and extra-curricular status (only once does Tseng mention that they talked of serious military problems) he was nevertheless a member of the inner mu-fu.

Wu Chia-pin exemplifies the type of literary and cultural companion who was always associated with Tseng. He had no formal position whatsoever; but this does not mean that he was inessential. For the most part Tseng mentioned him in the context of extra-official activities, but his constant presence during his visits was important, and he sometimes rendered such personal criticism or advice as had Ch’en Nai. Wu’s presence helped sustain Tseng in an extremely demanding task which Tseng frequently found both unpleasant and enervating.

Wu Chia-pin’s relationship with Tseng often bordered on the subordinate one of a student, as Tseng corrected and criticized his essays or poetry. But such was quite possible among friends of this kind. However, there were students in a proper sense in Tseng’s retinue. One of them, Chang Yü-chao, studied ku-wen under him. Tseng not only had a high estimation of his potential, but was quite fond of his company as well and regretted his absence:

Later I sent off Lien-ch’ing [Chang Yü-chao]. Lien-ch’ing has recently studied tirelessly. In writing ku-wen, moreover, he has progressed most skillfully. Of all my pupils, the greatest achievement may be expected from him. For this reason I have advanced this man. But lingering on the point of departure, my affection for him makes separation unbearable. Because he asked me to write an epitaph for his grandfather, today I presented it to him.

Much later Chang became a regular member of the mu-fu.

Needless to say, not all the associations between Tseng and the various members of his retinue were as affectionate and personal. Ho Ying-ch’i was a military advisor who served for a time as a battalion commander. Although he took a part in the theoretical discussions of which Tseng was so fond, accounts give one the impression of a certain reserve and businesslike formality in his relationship with Tseng, quite unlike that for

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35 Ibid., 593, 657.
36 Ibid., 584, 586–587, 592, 619, 629, 740.
37 Chang Yü-chao, chin-shih 1865, was a native of Wu-ch’ang, Hupeh. Yü Yü-ti, 46. See also Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 457, 460, 861.
38 Ibid., 740–741.
39 Yü Yü-ti, 46.
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those more familiar companions. Rather prophetically, it seems in retrospect, their discussions centered on the character and problem of leadership—subsequently Tseng had to remove Ho from the command of his battalion because of lack of discipline among the men, although this did not appear to affect Ho’s service with Tseng otherwise.

Because of the individual and personal nature of the functions served by the diverse personalities and relationships present in the inner mu-fu, this group is the least susceptible to systematic definition and arrangement. It is necessary to characterize Tseng’s immediate retinue as relatively informal and amorphous. But this characterization does not negate the functional importance of the inner mu-fu as a whole, nor is it meant to suggest that the rest of Tseng’s elaborate organization was also amorphous. The role of the inner mu-fu in the context of the wider organization is discussed later.

The Style of Tseng Kuo-fan’s Leadership

Tseng Kuo-fan’s personality dominated his following. Therefore the style and flavor of his activity inevitably illuminated his leadership of his subordinates and colleagues. But Tseng’s personality is difficult to approach. He tended to be distant, stern, moralistic, terse. He was demanding of himself and didactic to his followers. In contrast to the generous diary of Chao Lieh-wen (discussed below), Tseng’s diary is cryptic and laconic. Tseng was fond of recording brief facts, outlines, and lists, but not gossip, and above all not secrets (whether about personalities or matters of state). Many entries in his diary are nothing more than bare summaries of the day’s activities. It is not that his dairy does not contain a wealth of information and many insights into his personality. But it is often tantalizing in its suggestiveness. He complained often of poor health and physical disorders under the strain of his intense activity. He described at length natural locations he visited and discoursed extensively on philosophical and literary subjects. But when it came to apparently crucial conversations with a secretary, he often simply recorded the event with no elaboration of its contents beyond possibly the subject.

By no means did Tseng sit back and watch his operation run itself. He was constantly in touch with rather trivial matters, and personally supervised some of the most minute aspects of his campaign. In this meticulous attention to detail he frequently made notations of arrangements and lists of people and facts in his diary, along with reminders of things which had to be attended to. Such memoranda might include detailed admonitions and instructions to his subordinates, and various tasks to be

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41 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary. 642–643, 774, 775, 780.
42 Ibid., 644, 692, 819.
43 For instance, cf. ibid., 449–459 passim.
delegated. Moreover, as his campaign progressed Tseng’s correspondence loomed as his most time-consuming activity. He seems to have written immense numbers of letters and dispatches to other officials as well as to his own officers and advisors in the field.

The personal daily routine which Tseng set for himself in 1859 reveals the kind of activities which filled his day then:

Before first light, rise and look at the stars.
At daylight compose my mind. Sit respectfully before the “Sages’ Screen.” Then write diary.
After breakfast attend to official business. Write one or two letters.
Write paired scrolls for entertainment purposes, etc., or practice writing from copy slips.
At noon sit quietly and rest, or nap. At 2:00 PM eat lunch.
After lunch read at least ten pages, at most no more than thirty pages.
At sunset a brief rest or nap.
After dark review a ku-wen essay: ten times if less than one thousand characters, five times if more than one thousand characters.

Clearly, although his secretaries did not do everything for him, he usually expected to have considerable free time for unofficial activities and entertainment. But this was before he became governor-general.

Later, such a relaxed existence was no longer possible, and a new

44 For 15 August 1858, for instance, he recorded the following admonitions and instructions:

Those with command ability in the various battalions ought to be charged with special responsibility. The personal bodyguard battalion ought to have alternate turns on and off duty.

The above two items: Hsi-an [Li Hsü-i].

In bivouacking, it is best to select strategic ground. Command authority must be emphasized. Do not be careless of standard official procedures. Military officers may not handle contributions and likin money. Be equally prompt in responding to reports, orders, rescripts, as well as replying to letters.

The above five items: Wen-fu [Tseng Kuo-hua].

Tea houses and opium houses outside the camp cannot be permitted. A contingent of sixty percent strength cannot fight a battle requiring seventy percent strength.

The above two items: Yen-an [Li Hsü-pin].

Ibid., 461–462.

46 The volume of his correspondence required a separate classification system, which he set up for his principal correspondents on 3 September 1858. These included Hunan Governor Lo Ping-chang, Tso Tsung-t'ang, Hu-kuang Governor-General Kuan-wen, Hupeh Governor Hu Lin-i, Kiangsi Governor Ch'i-ling, Kiangsi Provincial Treasurer Lung Ch'i-jui, Yang Yueh-pin, P'eng Yü-lin, Li Hsü-pin, Chang Fei, Shen Pao-chen, home correspondence, Ch'i-an correspondence. Ibid., 481.

Ibid., 728–729. 15 September 1859. The “Sages’ Screen” mentioned here refers to the “Record of the Portraits of the Sages” which Tseng composed between 20 February and 23 February 1858. Ibid., 622–624. Cf. Tz'u-yuan, 1208 for a full explanation of this work.
proposed daily schedule in 1860 reflects the increased load of work after he became governor-general:

In recent days official business has been rather great, and increasingly my energy has not been sufficient to meet it. Hereafter, I have decided: every day, after rising early, either check rolls or review training or inspect fortifications—necessarily one of these three things. After breakfast write perhaps between two or three personal letters. Also correct two or three letters drafted by mu-yu. At 12:30 PM nap, and after lunch send off approved drafts. At 5:30 PM make notes of persons who ought to be recruited and matters which should be attended to. At night chant familiar books and avoid official business. Retire about 10:30 PM. 47

While the previous schedule smacks simply of Tseng's penchant for orderliness and routine, this new regimen seems to imply a holding action against the intrusions and pressures of increasing official duties. Tseng constantly sought refuge from his official burdens, and regretted his loss of time for literary and scholarly activities. His sense of public duty drove him on in his career, but he seemed to have little taste for the job itself.

He was not a dashing general personally at the head of his men in battle. He sat rather at the cockpit of his manifold military and civil organization, sending and receiving communications and conferring with his personnel. During the anxious period at the time of Li Yuan-tu's defeat, in a not unusually busy day, the burden of this position became most heavy:

In the morning I did not leave camp. Wrote a letter to Tz'u-ch'ing [Li Yuan-tu]. After breakfast filed papers, and wrote again to Tz'u-ch'ing. Chang Hsiao-p'u [Chang Fei] came and we talked at length. Met three visitors. Went out to send off Chang Hsiao-p'u. Just upon returning received a report from Tz'u-ch'ing stating that the city [Hui-chou] was secure and nothing was amiss. Altogether four times during the day I urged Mr. Pao [Ch'ao] to go to his aid. I replied to Governor Hu [Lin-i]'s and Governor Yü [-k'o]'s letters and sent letters to Tz'u-ch'ing, Chang Shu-yün [?], [Chang] K'ai-chang [?], and Tso-mei [Ch'en Nai]. Replied to letters from Wei-hsi [Shao I-ch'en] and Tz'u-ch'ing. During the second watch of the evening I heard that at 3:30 PM on the twenty-fifth [8/25 in the lunar calendar; 29 September 1860] Hui-chou fell and Tz'u-ch'ing's whereabouts is unknown. Because of this I could not sleep all night.48

In such crises Tseng frequently resorted to divination in order to find a solution or make a decision, a sort of ritual which was seriously employed in a quite matter-of-fact way to predict the outcome of policies or courses of action.49 Once when he had received no news of his brother

47 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 920–921. 22 August 1860.
48 Ibid., 945. 30 September 1860.
49 For instance: "After breakfast I requested Tz'u-ch'ing to forecast the occupa-
Tseng Kuo-ch’üan for some time, and was unable to overcome his anxiety for his safety, he “asked Li Hu-sheng to cast his fortune with tablets [dominoes?]. Apparently he is still safe.” This was but one more of the diverse services rendered by his closest secretaries.

Finally, the “awesome burden of responsibility” for Tseng was unrelied by any material personal indulgence. His quarters were far from sumptuous, as Chao Lieh-wen once described them: “Recently I visited the Grand Secretary [Tseng Kuo-fan] directly in his bedroom. The coarse cloth tent was low and small. There was only a cotton quilt and a grass mat. Besides two small boxes to one side, and paper and brushes arranged on a small table, there was not one thing of value! How admirable!” Such spartan self-denial was a well known characteristic of Tseng’s personality, in contrast to the numerous cases of notorious official self-indulgence.

As Tseng’s organization expanded, and as his share in all aspects of the suppression of the rebellion became greater, the demands on his attention correspondingly increased. Even so, the kind of literary and cultural interests which were so much a part of his earlier daily routine never ceased to engage him whenever he had the time. This constant preoccupation with study, writing, calligraphy, literary appreciation, and literary and philosophical discussion lent a peculiarly cultivated quality to Tseng’s headquarters and its immediate staff, some of whose members were notable (as we have seen) mainly for their scholarly credentials. His steady diet of literary activity rarely abated except in the midst of the most serious and pressing business, and then such diversion from his studies tended to accent the crisis. In fact sometimes he found he had to admonish himself:

Again, I wrote three poems. [Altogether I have] finished sixteen compositions. After lunch Teng Mi-chih [Fu-lun] came and with the whole company we talked about poetry. I am too inclined in war time to neglect regular duties for poetry and essays. Hereafter, I must be more careful.

These extracurricular pursuits did not contribute directly to the great
task at hand of defeating the Taipings. But if they merely created for Tseng’s organization a gratuitous atmosphere of culture, still it would not have seemed so to the members of his inner mu-fu. They, like their patron himself, regarded such things virtually as their raison d’etre—like him, they were all gentleman scholars and generalists, not specialists. The tension between the humane requirements of the generalist and the mechanical demands for specialization was becoming uneasily felt by Tseng. Whether they might somehow be harmonized, or whether instead they were ultimately incompatible is a central question to which I shall subsequently return. The inner mu-fu at least, was preeminently the stronghold of the generalists, which inevitably enhanced its unstructured and amorphous character.

CHAO LIEH-WEN

One of the more important advisors and secretaries under Tseng Kuo-fan fortuitously provided a wealth of detail and commentary in his own record of his career in the mu-fu. Chao Lieh-wen’s extensive diary offers a neat counterpart to Tseng Kuo-fan’s own diary—the secretary’s own point of view as distinct from that of his patron. It is worth examining Chao’s case history because it elucidates many of the characteristics of the mu-fu operation, both in its inherited traditional form and as it was being developed under Tseng.

If it is not improper to credit the impression his own account gives of his role, Chao Lieh-wen was an outstanding mu-yu. Indeed, he does not appear to have purposely inflated his own record of his activities, and he probably did not intend his diary for public consumption in any case. Yet even his most unembellished narrative frequently suggests that he was an important and respected person. It is important to remember, therefore, that Chao should not be taken as representative of the average secretary in Tseng’s service. Nonetheless, they were all to some degree unique; and one could hardly ask for a better example.

Chao was certainly an important catch for Tseng. His principal interview with Tseng at Tung-liu, Anhwei, has already been described in Chapter III. Actually, this was but one step in the more lengthy process of Chao’s entrance into the mu-fu, one of a series of visits and meetings they had, partly social and partly business, over a period of several weeks. From the first, he was apparently greatly impressed by what he observed and heard of Tseng’s character from the officers and adjutants who con-

55 The relevant sections of the two diaries are not coeval, of course. See Chapter III, n. 7. Nevertheless the useful material in Chao’s diary covers the period from mid-1861 to early 1865.
56 Wu Hsiang-hsiang, “Chao Lieh-wen Neng-ching-chü jih-chi ti shih-liao chia-chih” [The Value as an Historical Source of Chao Lieh-wen’s Neng-ching-chü jih-chi], Bibliography Quarterly (Shu-mu chi-k’an), I, 1 (Autumn 1966), 41–50, discusses the value and general character of Chao Lieh-wen’s diary.
ducted him about—the lack of ceremony between Tseng and his men, the observance of discipline, and the care and fairness with which he administered justice.\textsuperscript{57} Several days after this interview, on 27 August 1861, Chao submitted his \textit{curriculum vitae}, but it was not until 7 September that Tseng finally asked Chao to stay on.\textsuperscript{58}

Even so, Chao demurred. He had plans to travel on to Hunan and Hupeh, where he expected to see Tso Tsung-t'ang (for whom Tseng provided him with an introduction), but he promised to return after that. Meanwhile he lingered at Tung-liu, and when Tseng advanced his headquarters to An-ch'ing, which had only recently been taken, Chao accompanied his suite there several days later.\textsuperscript{59} He took leave of Tseng on 3 October, and again agreed to return, having been much influenced by Tseng's flattering request that he write for him a report on "barbarian affairs" during his trip.\textsuperscript{60}

Chao may be considered to have started working for Tseng from this time. During the course of his trip he inquired into and made notes on a wide variety of matters, including his perennial interest, "foreign affairs" (in the broad sense, which included the study of all foreign activities and policies in China, and of their characteristics and distinctions).\textsuperscript{61} Also, in his absence Tseng had recommended Chao along with a number of other men in a memorial to the court, an honor which additionally helped to attach Chao to Tseng's staff.\textsuperscript{62}

Upon his return to An-ch'ing on 15 February 1862, he submitted an informal memorandum to Tseng, reporting intelligence and observations of Taiping positions and strength, with some of his own opinions. It is interesting to note here the deferential and tentative style in which this report is couched—Chao is addressing Tseng not as a venerable teacher dispensing instruction to a respectful student, which the tradition of the \textit{mu-fu} mystique would have us believe was the role of the \textit{mu-yu}, but as an employee still somewhat uncertain that he is providing just what his employer wants from him.\textsuperscript{63} Chao was still no simple hireling, yet this was a kind of contractual relationship, albeit founded on mutual respect and friendship, in which the hierarchical order of "boss" and "worker" was clearly evident.

From the beginning, Chao was obviously pegged as a foreign affairs specialist, a competency for which there was a growing need in Tseng's \textit{mu-fu}. When Tseng Kuo-fan was made Governor-General of Liang-

\textsuperscript{57} Chao Lieh-wen, 617–619.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 625, 632.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 632–638.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 661, 665.
\textsuperscript{61} For instance, see \textit{ibid.}, 671, 677, 748.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, 829, 835; TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 439. As a formal device, this kind of recommendation will be discussed below.
\textsuperscript{63} Chao Lieh-wen, 833.
Kiang (Kiangsu, Kiangsi, and Anhwei) in 1860, his duties came to include review and advice to the government on all problems of state, and his particular territorial jurisdiction especially involved problems of "barbarian affairs." When the treaty settlements with the foreign powers of that year, which included the expansion of treaty rights and trading privileges up the inland waterways of the Yangtze, were concluded, such problems were naturally greatly multiplied.

Many of the documents concerning these new problems which came into Tseng's office, therefore, were sent to Chao for some kind of action. His new work now began in earnest, and he records what was involved. Periodically as they were received, Tseng sent memorials, reports, letters, treaties, and documents of various kinds to Chao, with instructions to comment on them, write critiques, draft replies, or simply note their contents. On 19 March 1862, for instance, "I received a copy of a dispatch from the Governor-General of Hu-kuang sent over by the Commander's office [Tseng Kuo-fan]. After reviewing it I sent it to the secretaty-clerks' office to be examined and received by Messrs. Chang and Yang, and received a receipt."64 Another instance indicates more explicitly what Chao was required to do: "The Commander showed the draft of Governor-General Kuan's [Kuan-wen, Governor-General of Hu-kuang] memorial to me and ordered me to annotate its unsatisfactory points, appending some comments at the end."65

In each case the procedure for handling a document was approximately the same. After the document was transmitted to Chao and he had done what was required with it (after as much as two or three days had elapsed), he returned it to the office, sending it to the same two secretaty-clerks (Yang Wan-chin and Chang Fu-fan) and receiving an acknowledgment or receipt, or he handed it directly to a messenger or adjutant.66

Initially, at least, Chao was kept occupied almost entirely with documents pertaining to problems occasioned by the recent treaty settlements with the foreigners and the subsequent expansion of their trade. As Tseng's colleague Kuan-wen, Governor-General of Hunan and Hupeh, was the other principal high regional official whose jurisdiction encompassed the

64 Ibid., 853.
65 Ibid., 850. 17 March 1862. The term translated here as "Commander" (k'uei-shuai) is one Chao frequently used in referring to Tseng. It is actually a kind of contraction for "Grand Secretary" and "Commander."
The memorial in question discussed the entrance of foreign ships into the Yangtze from Shanghai, and made proposals on customs houses and receiving customs revenue. It was common practice for the Court to send memorials from officials to other high officials for comment before making a final decision. Thus, this was one of Tseng's responsibilities in which Chao assisted.
66 Ibid., 837, 859, 861, 879, 945, 950. Yang Wan-chin and Chang Fu-fan were secretary-clerks in Tseng's mu-ju, possibly specially commissioned in this department of official business.
central Yangtze provinces into which the trade was penetrating, much of Tseng's business, directly or indirectly, was naturally with him. Other business included such items as dispatches transmitted from the Tsungli Yamen; treaty regulations for the inland waterways sent to Chao for study; and treaty clauses for the Russian overland trade.

Perhaps more intriguing was the less routine opportunity to criticize and comment on policy. When Kuo Sung-tao (one of Tseng's early associates and at this time a grain intendant in Kiangsu) sent Tseng a letter on the problem of foreign penetration and China's policy toward the western powers, Chao was ordered to draft a reply. One detects in his comments on this letter a hint of impatience:

I received from the Commander's office Intendant Kuo Yun-hsien's [Kuo Sung-tao] verbose letter which strongly disputes that Commander's previous letter. To say that it is better for the various customs stations to levy their own duties than for Shanghai to levy their duties for them is true. But not to permit them [the foreigners] to enter the inland waterways is even more desirable.

Chao goes on to say that while China has been insulted and treated with contempt, her injuries can hardly be rectified by balking on this one point of customs duties. In fact, the injustices done to China can only be corrected by working together, using the methods of self-strengthening and the West's own techniques, to restore her power. If the old habits of hypocrisy and insincerity in dealing with foreigners are not changed, he concludes that all these intentions will be ineffectual posturing. Chao's enlightened appreciation of China's endemic problem in foreign affairs is all the more interesting when juxtaposed, as here, with that of Kuo Sung-tao, who was himself no reactionary in this area—Kuo possessed a reputation for progressive ideas on foreign policy. By his presence in Tseng's staff, therefore, Chao had the opportunity to exert an important influence, both in his secretarial work and in the advice he tendered. Although the precise nature of this influence remains undetermined, Tseng was usually quite receptive to new ideas on China's modernization.

The upshot of this regular employment as a foreign affairs specialist was that after several months, Chao was specifically charged with foreign affairs cases. It is not clear whether this commission was a newly created position or whether Chao was simply on a probationary status up to this time, but apparently this was an honor and even a promotion of sorts. It

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67 In addition to the two cases cited above, see also *ibid.*, 950, 954, where proposals for regulations on foreign customs levies were involved.
71 Hummel, 438.
72 Chao Lieh-wen, 882. 31 May 1862.
seems that the first period of his employment may have been intended
as a training and familiarization process, leading to a more formal assign-
ment. Be that as it may, the character of his work did not radically
change for the time being, and he was certainly productively engaged
throughout.

However, Chao gradually assumed more important and varied respon-
sibilities. For one thing, he began to draft memorials for Tseng. As an
official could be judged by the Court by the quality of his memorials, this
was a more crucial function than answering dispatches from other officials
of equal or inferior rank.\textsuperscript{73} Moreover, on 31 October Chao was ordered
by Tseng to go to Chiu-chiang to lease a steamship for use in towing
transports to the aid of the siege of Nanking.\textsuperscript{74} This kind of task was a
departure from the work that had engaged him earlier in his service. If
his previous status had been probationary, now he had apparently become
a trusted and independent agent for Tseng.

After a long absence mainly spent in Shanghai, where he had gone next
after his commission to Chiu-chiang, apparently on a variety of errands
for Tseng, Chao returned to An-ch'ing on 13 March 1863.\textsuperscript{75} There he
resumed his duties as a foreign specialist. But in the meantime, his rela-
tionship with Tseng had grown. The expanded style of their contact was
notable especially in the more personal quality of their relationship.\textsuperscript{76}

In pursuing his special interest, Chao was more active than ever. Pre-
viously I mentioned his comments on some of Kuo Sung-tao's ideas on
foreign relations. Now Tseng showed him a manuscript of Feng Kuei-
fen's celebrated critique of China's modern problems and her relations
with the West.\textsuperscript{77} Chao kept the manuscript for several days, studying it
intensively and making very extensive notes in his diary, recording his
agreement or disagreement with its ideas and proposals.\textsuperscript{78}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73} In one case, which he specifically classifies as falling under his secretarial jur-
isdiction, he drafted a statement in reply to a "palace letter" calling for deliberation
on the advisability of using Indian troops to help in the siege of Nanking. \textit{Ibid.},
943. Another case, drafting a memorial in response to a request from the Court
for opinions on a proposal for relief of severe economic distress in the Eight Banners,
was beyond his usual purview. \textit{Ibid.}, 926–927.
\item \textsuperscript{74} \textit{Ibid.}, 1019.
\item \textsuperscript{75} From Shanghai, he reported back to Tseng, detailing observations of condi-
tions on the way, and making comments and suggestions for action that ought to be
taken, later annotating his summary of his report to indicate which ones were ulti-
mately carried out. \textit{Ibid.}, 1029–1031. 17 November 1862. Also, he arranged for the
purchase of foreign handguns and brought back a number of them. \textit{Ibid.}, 1044. 14
& 15 December 1862.
\item \textsuperscript{76} For instance, Chao was asked by Tseng to evaluate an essay written by his
son, Tseng Chi-tse, who accompanied Tseng from time to time. \textit{Ibid.}, 1115. 23–24
April 1863.
\item \textsuperscript{77} This work, the \textit{Chiao-pin-lu k'ang-i} (Chao referred to it as "Chiao-pin-lu
ch'u-kao"), edited by Feng in 1861, was not published until some years later in
1865, and was still considered modern at the end of the century. Hummel, 242.
For Feng Kuei-fen generally, see \textit{ibid.}, 241–243.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Chao Lieh-wen, 1115, 1119–1125. 23 April–1 May 1863.
\end{itemize}

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Exposure to the ideas of such men, who were noted for their relatively advanced awareness of China's real situation in the world, was probably an important source of Chao's special knowledge of this subject. Yet Chao himself seems to have been a fertile and independent thinker on foreign relations. While in Shanghai earlier, he visited Li Hung-chang, then Governor of Kiangsu, and broached to him his idea for the establishment of a foreign language training school:

As he also touched on foreign affairs, I proposed to him the establishment of a [foreign] language translation school. Intelligent and superior students from good families would be selected, or more obscure students would be chosen by examination. [The students] would be given a salary and required to study foreign language and writing. They would study and clarify all problems of Sino-foreign relations, in order to avoid [reliance on] sharp brokers and disloyal scoundrels, and irregularities and inconsistencies in terminology which cause crises between China and foreigners. The Governor very much agreed with what I said and agreed to propose it in a memorial.79

No doubt his experiences in Shanghai, which was becoming the focus of western contact, were another important source of Chao's knowledge. What other sources may have existed in his background to stimulate his interest in foreign affairs and modernization is a problem entirely unilluminated by his traditional biography.80 It seems likely that his special competence was largely self-taught, through direct observation and reading whatever sources were available to him (including those mentioned above). This may ultimately be an unsatisfactory explanation but, in any case, the issue of the sources of Tseng's and Chao's ideas on modernization and the West is peripheral to this study. What is central is the way in which Tseng employed such men based on their demonstrated knowledge and competence, and the significance of this employment for China's modernization. I will return to this problem in regard to Chao and others in the concluding chapter.

On his way back from Shanghai, Chao had stopped off to visit Tseng Kuo-ch'üan, commanding the great siege operation against the Taiping capital at Nanking as part of Tseng Kuo-fan's overall campaign strategy. (From the great castle-like fortress which was Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's camp outside the city, one could survey Nanking through a telescope, picking out the gilt roofs and spires of the huge palace of the Heavenly King of the Taipings.)81 Apparently Chao had made a great impression on

80 PCCP, 26:1a–3a. Wu Hsiang-hsiang's article on Chao's diary, cited above, offers no solution to this problem.
81 Chao Lieh-wen, 1089–1090.
Tseng's younger brother at this time, for some months later Tseng Kuo-ch'üan wrote asking Tseng to send Chao to him at Nanking. Chao quite earnestly made known his disinclination for an ambitious career, but he was nevertheless ultimately unable to prevail against Tseng's insistent desire that he should go—as an inducement Tseng conceded that if once he went, after he arrived there he could leave or remain as it suited him, or even come and go between the two places—and Chao departed for Nanking at the end of June 1863.82

In a way this was a new commission on Tseng Kuo-fan's behalf—Chao might be considered still a member of Tseng's mu-fu, on loan to his younger brother but with his connections with his original patron preserved. The situation remained ambiguous, because in other respects it amounted to a transfer to another mu-fu, albeit a satellite of the elder Tseng's.

Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's extraordinary regard for Chao was indicated by the memorial he submitted announcing new men taking up service in his mu-fu. This was the same device which Tseng Kuo-fan had used at the time Chao first entered his mu-fu, to bring Chao's name to the attention of the Court and thereby give notification of his employment. The effusiveness of Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's recommendation was a source of great embarrassment to Chao. Also, and more importantly, it was a harbinger of the problems to be generated in the future by Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's headstrong obstinacy. Earlier the moderate recommendation of the elder Tseng had caused problems for Chao, so he had good reason to be anxious:

My evaluation ran to more than twenty sentences. I felt that with so many men in this headquarters to have such an effusive evaluation in the very first report was improper, and I dread the notoriety. Last year after the Grand Secretary's [Tseng Kuo-fan] recommendation, everyone else was filled with malicious envy, and animosities nearly took over. Now I dare not again become a public target, but in spite of my urgent protestations, the Governor [Tseng Kuo-ch'üan] would not relent. Moreover, he said, "The point of this memorial is actually only to recommend you above all." Not only was I unable to decline, but my request to delete several sentences of the evaluation was also denied. The Governor ordered a revision of the phraseology, but having sent over a copy on which he signed "so-and-so earnestly supplicates," I felt all the more uncomfortable and uneasy. But what can be done?83

Once before, while Chao was away in Shanghai, Tseng Kuo-fan had recommended his name to the Court, this time for appointment to a district magistracy.84 Such a recommendation was a special mark of honor,

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82 Ibid., 1144, 1145, 1154.
83 Ibid., 1169. 24 August 1863.
84 Ibid., 1097–1098.
but one which had to be employed cautiously to avoid arousing jealousies:

The Commander said that a recommendation to a high post would cause people to talk, so there was nothing for it but to start from a trifle and work up, which must not arouse people's envy. Such genuine affection from him deserves uncommon gratitude.85

When Chao protested that he had simple desires and no ambition for an official career, but thought only of serving in a great general's suite, Tseng merely laughed. Apparently he did not take such reluctance seriously.

These recommendations must be understood as an important aspect of the operation of the mu-fu, especially in this period of ferment and change in political institutions. While a bureaucratic career was still widely esteemed, the immediate purpose of these recommendations was not to advance a prospect into some regular bureaucratic post. This is not to say that there may not have been ulterior motives guiding Tseng's use of the recommendation procedure—the placement of protégés in official posts could provide useful liaisons in the regular bureaucracy, for example. But Tseng did not go to the trouble of recruiting men for his personal staff just to help advance their careers or to populate the bureaucracy with his allies. Of course, recommendation could be a potential reward, bringing the name of a deserving subordinate to the attention of the Court so as to improve his future prospects. But Tseng needed qualified and competent personnel to man his growing personal apparatus. Recommendation also served to enhance the present value of a subordinate and further attach him to Tseng's service. Many of those who were recommended by Tseng, for example, eventually received an expectant rather than a substantive post and continued to serve Tseng directly.

Later on Chao had cause to reflect on the idiosyncrasies of the mu-fu career when, as another mark of his esteem, Tseng Kuo-ch'üan was particularly generous to Chao's friend:

The Governor sent thirty taels of silver for travelling money over to Ch'ing's [Teng Tz'u-ch'ing] quarters, which he was unable to decline. I told Tz'u-ch'ing: "As a mu-liao, one is usually treated very well by the mu-fu patron. If [the treatment is] too meagre, it would be very difficult to bear, but there would still be the option of leaving. But if too generous, then one feels he has no way to repay the treatment and he feels uncomfortable at heart, even to the point of being unable to eat or sleep." Now the Governor has never met Mr. Teng; his affection demonstrated in this indirect way causes me all the more concern.86

85 Ibid. 13 March 1863.
86 Ibid., 1180. 9 September 1863.

64
The intense personal quality of this relationship between the private secretary and his patron stands in marked contrast to the more impersonal and mechanical character of Chao's activities and qualifications. Two distinct levels of relationships thus defined Chao's role as a secretary: the personal one of a friend and colleague; and the impersonal one of a subordinate specialist. This is an inherent ambivalence in the mu-fu system.

Chao fulfilled much the same sort of function for Tseng Kuo-ch'üan as he had previously for Tseng Kuo-fan, except that now his work was less restricted to his special knowledge of foreign affairs (by virtue of Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's very limited official position, few opportunities arose), and his duties were more diverse. He was probably Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's most important advisor and counsellor on both military and political problems, and drafted letters and memorials for him as well. Indeed, drafting letters and memorials soon became the focal point of a critical problem for Chao.

Tseng Kuo-ch'üan had been billeted as Governor of Chekiang in 1863 but, in order to pursue his siege of Nanking, had not taken up the post. Thus while he held the rank of governor, which under normal circumstances carried the privilege of memorializing the throne, in fact he was serving under the auspices of his brother within his jurisdiction as Governor-General of Liang-Kiang, and was expected to pass his memorials through him. Nevertheless Tseng Kuo-ch'üan began increasingly to submit memorials on his own reliance. This was no small concern for Chao. It was properly within his responsibility to remonstrate with Tseng Kuo-ch'üan over such a breach of official etiquette, and this is what he did, persuading him to hold back a number of memorials, especially those on subjects which had no direct connection with his actual position at the moment.

In spite of Chao's remonstrance, however, Tseng Kuo-ch'üan unwisely persisted in his headstrong course. In the meantime, Chao had returned to An-ch'ing temporarily (he arrived there 17 October 1863). From there he wrote to Tseng Kuo-ch'üan, apparently anxious over just such an eventuality, explaining his position:

> In my humble opinion, your position is such that, while you are in sole authority both territorially and militarily, it is improper to trouble [the court] with superfluous proposals. It seems best to delay reporting on this month's activities; to submit no reports for one or two months would not be neglectful.

But Chao's warnings were either too late or unavailing. Several days

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87 Cf. ibid., 1160, 1162, 1185, 1187, 1193, 1196.
88 Ibid., 1193. 19 September 1863. Chao had earlier asked him to submit memorials to Tseng Kuo-fan for approval. Ibid., 1162. 27 July 1863.
89 Ibid., 1207. 17 October 1863.
later he was apprised that one of Tseng Kuo-ch’üan’s memorials had
been returned with the rescript: "As Tseng [Kuo-ch'üan] has not yet
assumed his official duties as Governor of Chekiang, hereafter he will
report military affairs along with Yang [Yüeh-pin] and P'eng [Yü-lin] via
Tseng [Kuo-fan]'s memorials, according to regulations, and not memo-
ralize on his own reliance."90

This was a grievous rebuke for an official to receive from the Court.
Tseng Kuo-fan, fearful that his brother might have fallen into a depres-
sion over it, ordered Chao to return immediately to Nanking. But Chao,
conscience-stricken that he had failed to prevent this very thing from
happening, determined not to go.91

It was only under intense pressure from Tseng that Chao eventually
capitulated.92 That Tseng was able to prevail was testimony to the respect
and admiration in which Chao held Tseng Kuo-fan. But the two levels
of relationships, equal and subordinate, which defined Chao’s position
are juxtaposed in this situation. Which relationship most influenced
Chao’s capitulation to Tseng’s wishes is not clear, and this question is
basic to understanding Chao’s mu-fu career.

Chao was back at Nanking on 23 December 1863. In this penultimate
stage of his service under the two Tsengs, initially he was once again
immersed in the busy work of drafting letters, reports, and memorials,
and in discussions of fiscal and strategic problems with Tseng Kuo-
ch’üan.93 But as the siege of Nanking mounted towards its climax during
the spring of 1864, the demands of its operation increasingly absorbed
all Chao’s attention as they already had Tseng Kuo-ch’üan’s.

Moreover, as the siege wore on, the immense stresses and strains of
maintaining it began to take their toll on Chao’s relationship with Tseng
Kuo-ch’üan. In spite of the seemingly inexorable force being brought to
bear on the city (the ring was closed on 15 March and the increased
pressure elicited signs of desperation and disintegration from among the
defenders), it was increasingly evident that a race was emerging between
Tseng Kuo-ch’üan’s prosecution of the siege operation and internal and
external pressures threatening to interrupt his plans. Chao found himself
in the center of this conflict which finally led to his breach with Tseng
Kuo-ch’üan.

90 Ibid., 1210. 24 October 1863.
91 Ibid., 1210–1211. Chao wrote to Tseng Kuo-ch’üan explaining and agonizing
over his dilemma. Ibid., 1211–1212.
92 Ibid., 1218, 1219–1220, 1223. Tseng took the extraordinary step of visiting
Chao himself on successive occasions to urge his return in compliance with his
wishes.
93 Cf. Ibid., 1241–1242, 1337, 1350. For much of January 1864 Chao was en-
gaged in an intensive review of all of Tseng Kuo-fan’s public reports for the period
from mid-1860 to early 1863 in order to familiarize himself with their contents.
Ibid., 1238–1241, 1251, 1261. This activity suggests his final point of reference was
always Tseng Kuo-fan.
On one hand, there was internal attrition in both materiel and morale. Chao felt obliged to bring to Tseng's attention the growing reports of eroding discipline within his army:

I went to see the Governor to report the various things I had heard outside. The Governor replied: “The pay and rations for all the battalions are greatly in arrears. Many soldiers are eating rice gruel, and the battalion Commanders are all ashamed to see it, and have no appetite for imposing more rigorous discipline. At present stores are exhausted and there is no place to get more. If one more month goes by without taking the city, we will be at the point of collapse.” He also said that at night he dreamed he had climbed a high mountain to the very peak, and saw that there was no way to return, so he could neither advance any further nor withdraw. He assumed this was not auspicious. Saying this, his expression seemed sad and dispirited, and there was nothing I could say that could alleviate it.94

Facing the danger that the failing morale and discipline among his troops would become epidemic, Tseng Kuo-ch'üan was exhausted by the difficulties of the siege.95

On the other hand, there was the external pressure generated by an impatient Court anxious for a speedy conclusion to this extended siege which, from the security of the north, seemed to have been going on all too long. The Court used the apparently imminent crisis within the ranks of the besieging forces to exert pressure to have the siege reinforced and thereby more quickly dispatch the Taipings.96 Li Hung-chang’s army had just completed a brilliantly successful campaign around Shanghai; his handy proximity to Nanking made his participation in the Nanking siege the next logical step from the Court’s point of view.

Li Hung-chang’s possible assistance was the occasion for elaborate posturings and delicate maneuverings among the parties involved.97 Having single-handedly prosecuted the attack for so long, Tseng Kuo-ch'üan was in no mood to share the final honor with any late-comer—least of all Li Hung-chang of whom he was becoming quite jealous.98 Burdened by the constant anxiety that the reward for his perseverance would be diluted in the final hour, he no doubt suffered greatly from the tensions

94 Ibid., 1295–1296. 30 March 1864.
95 Cf. ibid., 1319. 22 April 1864.
96 Someone no doubt not well disposed toward the Tsengs had reported to the Court the disintegration of morale within the army at Nanking, and this information got back to Tseng Kuo-ch'üan via a “palace letter” to Tseng Kuo-fan. Ibid.
97 Some of these maneuvers and his interpretation of them are detailed by Chao. Ibid., 1377–1379, 1383–1385. In contrast to other accounts of these events, Chao and Tseng Kuo-ch'üan were deeply suspicious of Li's motives, believing him to be in fact quite anxious to interfere in the Nanking operation. The contrasting interpretation given by Hail (pp. 286–289) and Folsom (p. 88) suggests that Li showed great finesse and tact in generously deferring to Tseng Kuo-ch'üan.
98 Hail, 286; Chao Lieh-wen, 1379. Hearing praise of Li's army caused Tseng Kuo-ch'üan such displeasure that Chao had to spend some time pacifying him.
and frustrations of his position. On the day before the final assault took place, the news arrived that Li had dispatched a large force to Nanking. "The Governor was at Lung-po-tzu with the army in the field when he received the dispatch, and he announced to the assembled officers: 'Others are coming! Do we give over two years of difficulty and distress to them?' All responded, 'We will make the supreme effort!'"

As the time for the coup de grâce approached, Chao became increasingly alarmed over the disintegration of discipline and security. But Tseng Kuo-ch’üan, himself succumbing to the strain, gradually lost patience with Chao’s persistent complaints, and his attitude turned hostile. Chao’s worst fears were realized when on the day of the triumph, discipline utterly evaporated as even the servants and grooms deserted headquarters, lured away by the prospect of looting. Fearing some catastrophe, Chao appealed to Tseng to reimpose control, but

The Governor was extremely weary then, and he was very displeased upon hearing what I said. His eyes widening, he asked, "what would you have me do?" I answered: "I hear the breach in the wall is very large; I fear you ought to go yourself to guard it." The Governor shook his head and did not respond.

Tseng Kuo-ch’üan was seemingly immobilized in the achievement of his final success, and now turned a deaf ear to Chao’s remonstrances.

Moreover, Chao was apprehensive lest some of the Taipings escape through the unguarded breach in the wall. Indeed, it was subsequently reported that the most feared Taiping leader, Li Hsiu-ch’eng, had escaped with the new "Heavenly King" by this exit. Once again, Chao approached Tseng, asking him to send off a hasty report to Tseng Kuo-fan and a supplementary memorial to the Court. Tseng refused, but by the next day he had thought better of it and consented. This oversight was

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99 Hail, 287.
100 Chao Lieh-wen, 1394. 18 July 1864.
101 Ibid., 1392, 1393. 13 & 16 July 1864. As the inevitable fall of the city neared, no one wanted to be left out of the action, and the usual careful security precautions broke down as everyone went to the forward lines, leaving no one in reserve at the rearward base. Tseng Kuo-ch’üan dispatched a member of his general staff to the rear to rectify this problem, but as this officer was sympathetic with the rank-and-file, nothing was done and Tseng took no further action. This was but one of the failures of Tseng Kuo-ch’üan’s leadership about which Chao was especially critical.
102 Ibid., 1396. 19 July 1864.
103 When Tseng Kuo-ch’üan insisted on drafting a memorial reporting the success and recommending many of his officers for their merit, Chao objected that he was once again exceeding his authority and violating a specific injunction from the Court against reporting anything more than a summary of facts. The rest must go through Tseng Kuo-fan. But Tseng Kuo-ch’üan rudely dismissed his objections. Ibid., 1397.
104 Ibid.; Hummel, 462.
105 Chao Lieh-wen, 1398. 20 & 21 July 1864.
later to prove an important embarrassment to Tseng Kuo-ch'üan (who had falsely reported the death of the young Taiping king), thus confirming Chao's judgment.\textsuperscript{106}

Although Nanking had fallen, discipline had still not been restored, and now the situation became more serious. Reports began to reach Chao of the orgy of destruction and looting that was being perpetrated by Tseng's troops in the city.\textsuperscript{107} Upon investigating, he was sickened and outraged by the ghastly carnage and wanton destruction taking place, in which much of the innocent population of the city was massacred along with the Taiping remnants.\textsuperscript{108}

Tseng Kuo-ch'üan was annoyed and angry over his secretary's incessant criticism of his actions (or inaction), and he let the fact be known.\textsuperscript{109} Although this breach in the façade of mutual respect and friendship which ideally characterized the \textit{mu-fu} occurred in the context of the pressing tribulations of a long-endured siege, it was nevertheless indicative of the sort of clash between the secretary's principle and the official's self-will which could (and ideally even ought to) afflict the relationship. It was testimony to the persistence of the \textit{mu-fu} mystique that Tseng Kuo-ch'üan subsequently apologized to Chao for some of his previous behavior, and Chao was appeased.\textsuperscript{110}

At times it must have seemed to the younger Tseng that Chao's point of reference was always Tseng Kuo-fan. There may have been some substance to this. Thus when Tseng Kuo-fan arrived at Nanking on 28 July, Chao took up with him again with alacrity. But with the lifting of the pressure of the war, Chao's direct involvement with Tseng Kuo-fan became less regular and his mention of work for him is sporadic.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{106} Hummel, 750. Tseng Kuo-ch'üan's negligence and premature report elicited a severe reprimand from the Court. Chao Lieh-wen, 1400, 1410. Again, Chao was deeply affected by what he felt to be his own failure in his responsibility to avert this catastrophe in the first place. \textit{Ibid.}, 1412–1414.

\textsuperscript{107} Cf. Hail, 290. Some of the secretaries who had observed the events were themselves robbed and nearly killed. Graves were being dug up everywhere in search of treasure. Chao Lieh-wen, 1404, 1405. 25 & 26 July 1864.

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, 1405–1406. 26 July 1864. Tseng Kuo-ch'üan had widely distributed proclamations prohibiting arson, killing, and rape. Chao specifically found a number of officers particularly culpable in these acts, but Tseng was apparently unwilling or unable to take any action. \textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, 1406.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.} At the time of his final departure from Tseng Kuo-ch'üan later, Chao made a favorable assessment of his character and personality, that the errors of his previous conduct were trivial and that the faults of a superior man, for all to see, were not to be compared with those of one who conceals his faults from a sense of shame. \textit{Ibid.}, 1458–1459. 31 October 1864.

\textsuperscript{111} The last important order of business for Chao was the rather mysterious affair of the disposal of the captured Taiping Chung Wang, Li Hsiu-ch'eng, and his "confession." Earlier, Chao's intervention in the nick of time had barely prevented Tseng Kuo-ch'üan from executing him on the spot following his capture. Then Chao had pleaded Peking's interest in such a catch. \textit{Ibid.}, 1400–1401. 23 July 1864. Now, he readily agreed with Tseng Kuo-fan's intention to execute him
The history of Chao's service with Tseng Kuo-fan reflects the ambivalence between the generalist and the specialist in the role of the private secretary in the mu-fu system. His career in a sense vacillated between the two basic career types which we have seen coexisted in the mu-fu tradition: the mutual friendship between fellow generalists; and professional specialization for its own sake. The prominence of the personal value of friendship and the impersonal value of technical proficiency shifted with the demands made on him.

Although his role wavered, the attractions of the generalist tradition remained strong for Chao. The point is that the potential for specialization could be stimulated by a growing demand for technical competence. For Chao at least, the choice between generalist and specialist was unresolved. But for others who followed him, a career as a specialist was increasingly becoming a viable alternative. The explicit elaboration of a more formal bureaucratic structure which is the subject of the following chapters had its germination here in the still largely unrefined proto-bureaucratic core of Tseng's expanding organization.

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before having received the Court's instructions on the matter. *Ibid.*, 1410. 3 August 1864. In the meantime, Li Hsiu-ch'eng's celebrated "confession" had been extracted from him, and Chao later assisted Tseng in preparing the document for transmission to the Grand Council. *Ibid.*, 1415, 1417. See Ho Lieh, "'Li Hsiu-ch'eng ch'in-kung-shou-chi' ting-wu" [Examination of Mistakes in the Manuscript of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession], *Tung-fang tsa-chih*, II, 4 (October, 1968), 39–43, for a recent study of the problem of this interesting document.
V
The Growth of a Private Bureaucracy

Tseng Kuo-fan was sent out to suppress the Taipings without any financial appropriation or administrative staff provided by the government. He was expected to borrow the facilities of the regional official structure and call on the support of private gentry assistance, either one or both of which could easily deny him their support and impede his progress. Confronted by these obstacles, he gradually created a personal administrative organization to support his military operations, which could only expand as his financial support developed or he acquired a more formal or regular official position. Such self-reliance was expected of him by the central government, which left him to his own devices.

These devices included military, fiscal, and personnel apparatuses of an increasingly autonomous bureaucratic character. The development of these devices was a process quite different, for instance, from the establishment of a personal staff by a district magistrate, for whom the staff was made necessary as much by the unfamiliar complexity and established tasks of an office for which he was ill-equipped, as by any lack of subordinate personnel provided by the government or attached to his official position or office. The magistrate had a fixed and limited task, salary (with ample opportunities for augmenting it), and office, to which his personal staff was supplementary. Tseng Kuo-fan had a broad and indefinite task, no established financial support, and no official location. He had to create his organization from the ground up, and also to devise the very means for its support. Thus his organization was different in function and scope from a local official's mu-fu.

The organization of the district magistracy reflected the various functions it served as the fundamental administrative unit. Both the formal petty officials and the informal personal staff of secretaries, clerks, and servants, therefore, corresponded to the primary preoccupations of the magistracy (law and taxation), as Table 1 below suggests. The personnel structure represented here is an ideal one, but it nevertheless indicates the basic orientation of the regular local administration. It is important to

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1 Hail, 201, describes the difficulties occasioned by Tseng's lack of regular official status. Tseng's report on his reorganization following his appointment to the powerful post of Governor-General of Liang-Kiang in 1860, and his reflections on his previous lack of authority, illustrate the problem of his earlier position. TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 333. See also ibid., "Nien-p'u," 75-76. This problem, as well as Tseng's financial arrangements—the nature of the support he thus developed and its significance—will be discussed in the following chapter. Here the intention is to discuss the administrative apparatus itself.
Table 1

Personnel of the District (Hsien) Administration
(Based on Ch’ü T’ung-tsu, 8–9, 38–41, 76, 97)

I Magistrate (hsien-ling)

II Subordinate Officials

1. Assistant magistrate (tso-erh)
   - Assistant magistrate (hsien-ch’eng)
   - Registrar (chu-pu)

2. Chief officer (shou-ling kuan)
   - Jail warden (tien-shih)

3. Miscellaneous officials (tsa-chih)
   - Subdistrict magistrate (hsin-chien)
   - Postmaster (i-ch’eng)
   - Tax collector (shui-k’o-ssu ta-shih)
   - Granary supervisor (ts’ang ta-shih)
   - Sluice keeper (ch’a kuan)
   - Fish tax collector (ho-po-so kuan)

III Unofficial Staff

1. Clerks (li)
   - Civil branch (li-fang)
   - Revenue branch (hu-fang)
   - Rites branch (li-fang)
   - Military branch (ping-fang)
   - Legal branch (hsing-fang)
   - Works branch (kung-fang)
   (plus up to ten others, for special record-keeping tasks)

2. Secretaries (mu-yu)
   - Law (hsing-ming)
   - Taxation (ch’ien-ku)
   - Tax collections (cheng-pi)
   - Registration (kua-hao)
   - Correspondence (shu-ch’i)
   - Brushes (chu-mo, hung-hei pi)
   - Bookkeeping (chang-fang)

3. Servants (ch’ang-sui)
   - Gate porters (ssu-hun, men-shang)
   - Endorsement attendant (ch’ien-ya, kao-an)
   - Granary supervisors (ssu-ts’ang)
   - Kitchen superintendent (kuan-ch’u)
   - Personal attendant (ken-pan)
   - Court attendant (chih-t’ang)
   - Correspondence attendant (shu-ch’i)
   - Seal attendant (yung-yin)
   - Land tax and grain tribute attendant (ch’ien-liang, ch’ien-ts’ao)
   - Jail attendant (kuan-chien)
   - Post station supervisor (kuan-hao)
   - Miscellaneous taxes (shui-wu)
note that the magistrate’s personal staff filled the gaps in the official roster of subordinate officials (seldom were all these positions actually filled by separate personnel), and otherwise supplemented the specific functions and established tasks of the office.  

Tseng Kuo-fan's organization diverged from this established mode of local administration. In function, his initial organization was similar to the earlier form of the mu-fu as a military staff, before it became adapted to the uses of civil regional government. But as it developed through ad hoc arrangements, the resulting organizational structure ultimately served different functions and more varied objectives from those which had characterized the conventional mu-fu. The most important of these functions fall into two principal groups: the increasingly complex financial operations, discussed in the following chapter; and the training and advancement of personnel, to be discussed in the present chapter. In addition, a somewhat less important group included technological functions. The result was a kind of personal bureaucracy, which although private, was still not merely a glorified mu-fu.

The general outline of Tseng's organization during 1858 is reconstructed in Table 2 below. As noted in Chapter IV, Tseng set out on his second campaign in 1858. The reorganization which he undertook then made this period especially important, and data on his organization are relatively explicit and abundant.  

Clearly, this was not a normal mu-fu. To review an important point, raised in Chapter I and again in the beginning of Chapter IV, relating to this study's perspective on the mu-fu: only if the term is construed in the broadest possible sense can the organization developed by Tseng be called a mu-fu. Moreover, such a view tends to mask significant institutional developments. In fact, the structure exhibited in Table 2 is an organization which had evolved beyond the limits of the mu-fu and should not be characterized as one. First, although mu-yu staffed many elements of this organization, much of the "inner mu-fu" as defined in Chapter IV is not visible here—many of Tseng's mu-yu were not formally attached to any part of this structure. Second, certain segments of this organization were established in relatively permanent locations independent of Tseng's temporary location at any given time—the organization was geographically

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2 Ch'ü T'ung-tsu points out that many of the possible subordinate official posts rarely existed in practice, and in any case all were very insignificant positions. Ibid., 10-13. 

3 The problem of the loss of the earlier portions of Tseng's diary has been noted in Chap. III, n. 7. It is appropriate at this point to inject a cautionary note, that data and sources of information on both mu-fu organization and more specialized organization are elusive. Often considerable uncertainty must exist in reconstructing such unofficial structures. The dynamics of the organization and its constituent parts is especially difficult to determine with certainty. Tseng Kuo-fan was in the habit of making lists, but there is no guarantee of the thoroughness of these, and they usually lack any indication of operational structure.
Table 2

Tseng Kuo-fan’s Organization in 1858
(Based on Tseng, Diary, 451, 464–465, 471–473, 508)

I Retinue (sui-shen)
1. General Staff (ying-wu ch’u)
   Staff officers (wei-yuan)
   Company officers (shao-pien)
   military police officers (hsün-ch’a)
   company commanders (pai-chang)
   signal officers (ta-ch’i)
2. Wing Commanders (i-chang)
   [Divisional commands; “left” 4000 men, “right” 5000 men]
3. Adjutants (hsün-pu)
   civil (wen) and military (wu) ranks
4. Inner Treasury Department (nei yin-ch’ien so)
5. Inner Munitions Department (nei chün-hsieh so)
6. Judicial Department (fa-shen so)
7. Official Documents Secretary (kuan-kung-tu)
8. Correspondence Secretary (kuan-shu-ch’i)
9. Secretary-clerks (wen-an)
10. Orderlies (ko-shih-k’a)
11. Servants (chia-jen)
    sealkeeper (men-yin)
    endorsements attendant (ch’ien-ya)
    brushes and ink attendant (pi-mo)
    valet (i-fu)
    footman (ken-pan)

II Commissariat (liang-t’ai) [Range: 40–80 li from headquarters]
1. Supervisors (hu-li liang-t’ai)
2. Outer Treasury Department (wai yin-ch’ien so)
3. Outer Munitions Department (wai chün-hsieh so)

III Financial Organization
1. Accounting Office (pao-hsiao chü), combining the local branch of the
   Supply Office (see below) at Hu-k’ou, Kiangsi
   General manager (tsung-li)
   Commissioners (wei-yuan) [Co-managers, one of whom managed
   the records]
   Shipyard (ch’uan ch’ang)
   Bursars (chih-ying)
2. Supply Office (chuan-yun chü)—branches located in Hu-k’ou, Kiangsi;
   Kuei-ch’i, Kiangsi; and Han-k’ou, Hupeh
   Commissioners (wei-yuan)
3. Disbursement Office (chih-ying chü)—Kiangsi Commissioners
   (wei-yuan)

74
dispersed. Third, and perhaps most important, this structure suggests a specifically functional organization of an order quite different from that of the conventional mu-fu. This staff did not supplement some pre-existing structure; instead it composed the organizational form itself.

**Tseng Kuo-fan’s Bureaucracy**

Tseng’s administrative structure may be characterized by two basic levels of organization: (1) a mu-fu (in the restricted sense of the term as applied in this study) composed informally of Tseng’s intimate associates, advisors, trainees, and secretarial and clerical staff; and, (2) a “bureaucracy” composed of more formal (in the sense of having explicit and concrete form or structure) and functionally diversified departments and offices. An important terminological distinction provides the rationale for this characterization. The principal components of the “bureaucracy” were “offices” (chii) and “departments” (so), having well-defined jurisdiction and limited functions. They were staffed by “deputies” (yuan or wei-yuan), having relatively well-defined status and limited responsibilities. In contrast, the mu-fu was characterized by indefinite form and diffuse functions; its members were mu-yu who (particularly in the “inner mu-fu”) had variable status and diffuse responsibilities, the character of which we have discussed in Chapter IV. Another distinction bearing on this characterization involves the degree of relationship between Tseng and his personnel: as subordinate functionaries, the “deputies” often had a less personal and immediate relationship with Tseng than did the members of his inner mu-fu.

The two basic organizational levels were not mutually exclusive. Members of Tseng’s mu-fu served in important positions in his “bureaucracy,” making a sharp demarcation of structural boundaries impossible. Some other reasons for this overlap will become clear later. While Tseng’s “bureaucracy” represented a development beyond the mu-fu, a prototypical mu-fu continued to exist in Tseng’s service.

In regard to this lack of organizational clarity, it is noteworthy that there was evidently a real reluctance on Tseng’s part to allude to his “bureaucracy” in public dispatches and other documents, much less to reveal its workings. This reluctance is itself possibly the most eloquent testimony to the unusual political nature of his organization. This question will be dealt with further in the concluding chapter. For the time being, it is sufficient to note that the mu-fu was a recognized practice, whereas its extensive elaboration could have been regarded by the government as a challenge to its authority. A reluctance to refer to such development may also have been partially responsible for the perpetuation of the official image of an official’s private organization—regardless of its actual ramifications—as merely an innocuous mu-fu.4

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4 Compare this terminological problem with a similar one with respect to t’uan-lien discussed in Kuhn, 208.
Within Tseng Kuo-fan's "bureaucracy," as distinct from his _mu-fu_, two principal divisions may be distinguished (see Table 2): (1) a staff organization (Tseng's retinue, including his General Staff, supporting departments, secretaries, clerks, orderlies, etc.) generally serving in his immediate company; and, (2) the rest of the administrative apparatus (including the Commissariat and the financial organization) generally operating apart from Tseng. Like the distinction within the _mu-fu_ itself alluded to at the beginning of Chapter IV, this distinction may also be characterized by an "inner-outer" dichotomy. One can detect this feature most explicitly in the distinction between the "Inner Treasury Department" (nei yin-ch'ien so) of Tseng's retinue and the "Outer Treasury Department" (wai yin-ch'ien so) of the Commissariat, for example.

The first of these two divisions, Tseng's staff organization or retinue, served diverse advisory, planning, and executive functions relating to military, political, and fiscal affairs. It was that portion of Tseng's entire "bureaucracy" most closely linked with the overlapping _mu-fu_. The most visible feature of this overlap is the appearance in the retinue of the lesser staff of clerical personnel which composed the "outer _mu-fu_." Important _mu-yu_ also served in more eminent positions throughout this division. In addition, the retinue was distinguished from the rest of the administrative apparatus by its proximity to Tseng, and hence its mobility.

Unfortunately, there is little concrete information on the operation of many of the departments of Tseng's "bureaucracy." From what may be discovered in Tseng's diary and elsewhere in his works, however, it appears that specific regulations often governed the structure and operation of the subordinate parts of his organization.5

The "General Staff" (ying-wu ch'u) was the key segment of Tseng's retinue. The prototype for this organization existed in the regular Army of the Green Standard (lù-ying).6 Apart from the lesser company-level military officers attached to it, the General Staff included some of the most important of Tseng's advisors from his _mu-fu_ (Li Yuan-tu and Li Jung, for example).7 While in this respect it served the more traditional function of a military advisory and planning staff, it also had a newer capacity for developing and promoting generalship.

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5 The specification of the conditions of pay and promotion for orderlies (ko-shih-k'a; Manchu: gocika) provides an example of the kind of regulations for subordinate units detailed by Tseng (Diary, 501):

Six taels [monthly wages?] per orderly. Five men to one tent. Three servants per tent. Those promoted to [the rank of] captain additionally receive two personal servants. Those promoted to [the rank of] lieutenant-colonel or major additionally receive three personal servants. Those promoted to [the rank of] lieutenant or sergeant additionally receive one personal servant. Acting Company Commanders [also] receive one servant and one horse and maintenance [for these]. (Cost for a servant, three taels; cost for a horse, one tael.)

6 Lo Erh-kang, 161.

7 Tseng, _Diary_, 471; Yü Yü-ti, 24.
The "Judicial Department" (fa-shen so) was a quasi-political agency which dealt with problems arising from the interaction between Tseng's organization and the local political and social structures. Some of the cases it handled show that one function of this department was the investigation and disposition of the conflicts which often arise between elements of Tseng's army and the local populace or gentry.8

The "Inner Munitions Department" (nei chün-hsieh so) was an agency for the manufacture, supply, and development of armaments for Tseng's forces. At first, it worked only with traditional Chinese weapons, but it became the locus of experiments in the manufacture of western-style arms. It was thus the beginning of later, more sophisticated arsenals which developed under Tseng's guidance. Its staff included Tseng's scientific advisors and engineers.9

The second principal division of Tseng's bureaucracy (essentially the rest of the administrative structure apart from his immediate staff organization) included Tseng's Commissariat and his financial administration. This division was by far the largest part of his bureaucracy, reflecting the

8 One such case is recorded by Tseng as follows:
When four soldiers of the Vanguard Battalion were passing through Ying-t'an [Kiangsi] [they were attacked] by [members of] the militia office [t'uan-chü] there and one of them was killed while three were badly wounded. Subsequently at 9:30 AM Magistrate T'an came to report [the incident]. Therefore I ordered T'an to make an inquiry. After T'an investigated he returned to report. The evidence was confused and only the murderers' statements had been taken. This was simply evasion of responsibility [on T'an's part]. Therefore I ordered that Officer Tseng Shou-wen, Licentiate Huang Tsung-fa, and innkeeper Kuei Sheng-sheng be arrested and brought to headquarters, and turned the case over to Li Hu-sheng [Li had charge of the Judicial Department] for further investigation. . . . At 7:30 PM Li tried the case. [It seemed that] after they had attacked the four soldiers, the militia office conspired to send in a trumped-up report to the district seat. The circumstances [of the attack] were extremely cruel. Therefore Tseng Shou-wen was sentenced to death, while Huang Tsung-fa and Kuei Sheng-sheng are to be conducted to Hu-k'ou, as forfeiture if any of the wounded men die and the case is reopened.

Tseng, Diary, 493. 11 September 1858.

The circumstances of another case were less clear, but seem to have involved the general populace rather than specific gentry:
Today some soldiers of the Guard Battalion [hu-chün-ying] were wounded by the people in T'ang family village east of the [Fu] river. The people came to make an oral report, and the Judicial Department investigated. The investigation was not yet complete when two Fu-chou soldiers [ping], two Lin-ch'uan policemen [ch'a], and two bodyguards [ch'in-ping] were sent to T'ang family village to retrieve the soldiers that had been seized. The village also seized these men. Only at night did they finally return. The perverse customs of the locale are really abominable.

Ibid., 667. 11 May 1859. See also ibid., 511 & 551 (the former page has been misbound and should appear following page 544) for a further example of such conflicts.

overwhelming importance of the role of finance and fiscal operations in the development and maintenance of his activities.\(^{10}\) This division was also penetrated by \textit{mu-yu} serving as supervisory personnel (Li Hung-chang's elder brother, Li Han-chang was the most notable of these.)\(^{11}\) But otherwise this part of his organization was characteristically more dispersed and stationary than the first division. As the nature of Tseng's fiscal organization and its operations will be discussed in the following chapter, it will suffice here merely to indicate its general character in the context of his organization.

The prototype for the "Commissariat" (\textit{liang-t'ai}), as for the General Staff, existed in the \textit{lii-ying}.\(^{12}\) Tseng is not particularly rigorous in his application of the term \textit{liang-t'ai}, which raises problems in interpreting the precise function of the Commissariat. In his official reports it seems to be used as an inclusive term for his whole financial organization, while privately he uses it in a more restrictive sense.\(^{13}\) This variance suggests an intentional vagueness meant to disguise the more radical nature of his extensive fiscal structure. The same problem has been noted above in relation to Tseng's reluctance to reveal the nature of his apparatus in public writings.

In the narrow sense in which it will be interpreted here, the Commissariat was a mobile intermediate division of Tseng's bureaucracy, serving as a fiscal liaison between his staff organization or retinue and the more dispersed and stationary parts of the fiscal apparatus.\(^{14}\) The "Treasury Department," through its "inner" and "outer" branches in the retinue and the Commissariat respectively, seems to have acted as a receiving agency for funds fed into the organization from the various revenue sources of the fiscal apparatus.\(^{15}\)

When Tseng became Governor-General of Liang-Kiang in 1860, his new official authority greatly augmented the potency of the private bureaucracy he had already developed. The effect of this new power on his organization is not entirely clear. Of course the regular provincial bureaucracy within the areas of his jurisdiction (Kiangsi, Kiangsu, and Anhwei) was now at his command. Like any newly appointed regional official, he

\(^{10}\) Tseng's private bureaucracy as defined in this study is, of course, exclusive of his military organization per se. See Introduction.

\(^{11}\) Tseng, \textit{Diary}, 472; TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 291. Li Han-chang later became Governor-General of Hunan and Hupeh. HPCC, 30:21a. See Chap. VI for his place in Tseng's financial organization.

\(^{12}\) Lo Erh-kang, 163. I am unable to discover any corroboration for the eight-fold functional division of this institution made by Lo Erh-kang. (See \textit{ibid.}, 162–163.) Tseng does mention four of these divisions (\textit{nei yin-chien so}, \textit{wai yin-chien-so}, \textit{chün-hsieh so}, and \textit{fa-shen so}), and by implication possibly a fifth (\textit{wen-an so}), although not precisely in this organizational context. See above, especially Table 2.


\(^{14}\) This mobility is also suggested by Lo Erh-kang: the Commissariat came to be located in the headquarters of the marine force. Lo Erh-kang, 163.

\(^{15}\) See Tseng, \textit{Diary}, 579.
normally would have had to supply his own personal staff of secretaries and subordinate functionaries—but this, and more, he had already created. We will see (in Chapter VI) that he restructured his private financial administration along provincial lines of organization, yet still with supraprovincial objectives. Moreover, he established his new yamen, with its conventional six divisions matching the Six Boards of the central government, on board his flagship at An-ch’ing. This was to be his new official residence as it had been his old headquarters. Thus he accommodated his new official status to his old position—he abandoned neither his mobility nor his larger objectives.

Apparently what resulted from Tseng’s new position of official authority was neither the atrophy of his personal organization nor its complete absorption by the regular provincial organization. Instead the two were joined together, and the official provincial machinery was at least partially placed in the service of Tseng’s supraprovincial objectives. Examples to be discussed later include: the use of the Kiangsi financial commissioner’s office for the fiscal accounting and reporting for Tseng’s entire organization; the practice of military recruitment from selected provinces for transprovincial ends; and the levy of likin from a single province (Kiangsi) to support extraprovincial activities. One motive of the government may have been to curtail by this appointment the development of Tseng’s autonomous position; but the organization which he had already built up—precisely because he originally lacked such a substantive official position—had acquired sufficient momentum to preserve itself against this threat. In the crucial areas of personnel and finance, therefore, Tseng’s autonomy remained intact.

THE PROCESS OF ELABORATION

Initially, Tseng’s organization was not extraordinarily large. When he set out from Ch’ang-sha in 1858 his retinue, including facilities for its material support, was embarked in only ten boats (ch’uan). The size of these boats is unspecified, but they could not have been large—Tseng with Liu Jung and Kuo K’un-tao occupied one boat. Somewhat later, Tseng listed the number of supervisory personnel of the two divisions of his develop-
The number of individuals specifically associated in Tseng’s diary with the various components of the organization given in Table 2 amounted to seventy-seven persons. Finally, Lo Erh-kang provides a cumulative table of 182 principal personnel in the Hsiang Army organization. The sources for this list are biographies of the period, but only eighteen of the personnel listed (approximately ten percent) are clearly “civil” advisory and secretarial personnel: practically all the rest are military officers and commanders in the Hsiang Army itself.

These various sums do not pertain to identical groupings of personnel. Nevertheless they suggest the relative magnitude of Tseng’s organization. Compare the total of seventy-seven personnel of all types in Table 2, for instance, with what may be gleaned from Ch’ü T’ung-tsu’s comparable outline of the district magistracy. From the latter, one may suppose a normal or typical magistracy to have had a complement (including all types of personnel) of thirty to sixty persons.

The numerical size of Tseng’s organization did not make it unusual. Rather, it was the process of ad hoc ramification by which it grew that is significant. This process is obvious in the evolution of Tseng’s complex financial administration discussed in Chapter VI. Here it may be illustrated by some of the minor elaborations of his organization:

1. On 15 October 1858, Tseng arrived in Chien-ch’ang, in eastern Kiangsi, where his headquarters would be located for several months (until 16 March 1859). Several days after his arrival, he established a “Forwarding Department” (ti-wen so) at Nan-ch’ang, the provincial capital, and dispatched two men there to manage it.

As with most other such divisions of his organization, Tseng fails to provide details of this department’s operation. But its purpose would seem to have been to provide a liaison for official communications which, given his lack of any regular official position at this time, would necessarily have had to be transmitted to Tseng through the official provincial structure at Nan-ch’ang. The two men deputized to manage this department were apparently only lesser agents in his organization—they are mentioned very infrequently by Tseng and do not appear in the lists of mu-yu given by Hsueh Fu-ch’eng and Yii Yii-ti.

Tseng was not inclined to leave such organizational matters to chance.
His penchant for orderliness led him later on to specify the conditions of a private messenger service with his home. Elapsed time spent by the messengers in travel and rest was fixed, *per-diem* expenses were paid, and punishments and rewards were assigned according to the number of days late or early by the schedule, as incentives.23

(2) Because of incessant disputes arising between his soldiers and local money-changers (*ch'ien-tien*), on 25 March 1859 Tseng ordered the Commissariat to open its own money-changing service.24 The purpose, to stabilize currency exchange and thereby eliminate a cause of friction between his army and the local population, reflected a constant concern of Tseng's. He was extremely anxious that his army preserve a reputation for good behavior, and he was therefore sensitive to the potential hostility which his troops might generate among the populace.25 This reputation was an important part of the competition with the Taipings, whose depredations lost them vital support.26

(3) Sometime before 9 October 1858 a “Rice Office” (*mi chii*) was established through the initiative of one of the members of the General Staff.27 This office was a joint enterprise undertaken with the participation of local gentry to stabilize the price of rice. The gentry staffed it, and a subordinate officer of the General Staff oversaw its operation. The purpose was to prevent fluctuation and speculation in the price of grain.28 The presence in a locality of a large force such as Tseng’s would certainly tend to raise prices—such an office was no doubt designed in the interests of the army to protect it from exploitation through this unusual situation.29

(4) The “Loyalty Office” (*ts'ai-fang chung-i chii*), apart from its possible function of attracting talent, was an ideological indoctrination and morale office staffed by Tseng's followers.30 It represented a further way

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25 For examples of Tseng's concern for disturbance of the local population by his troops, see *ibid.*, 531, 712, 778, 847. Tseng formally warned his troops against disturbing the people when pitching camp. They were not to remove the planks of the gates, dismantle houses and remove bricks, trample grain and seedlings or destroy the people's fields and products, take their ducks and chickens, borrow their pots and pans, send for them to dig trenches, expel them from their houses, build walls that obstructed access to roads, cut graveside trees for firewood, or fetch water from fishponds. TWCKCC, “Tsa-chu,” 71. This is a remarkable catalog of what must have been the normal transgressions of an ordinary government army.
26 Cf. Wright, 202.
27 Tseng, *Diary*, 530.
28 *Ibid.* It is not clear why the General Staff, not the Commissariat, had supervision of this office, except that it was a General Staff member (Wang Jen-shu) who had developed the idea.
29 Organizations of this type took various forms. Chao Lieh-wen records some details of a “Steamship Convoy Office” (*lun-ch'uan hu-shang chii*) which offered “protection” to shipping on the Yangtze River. Chao Lieh-wen, 1048. Larger merchant craft paid a fee and received an identifying pennant and a passport from the ships attached to the office.
30 See Chap. III for the circumstances of its founding.
to combat the Taipings at a local level by promoting local models of virtue, the emulation of which would encourage greater enthusiasm in defense of the old order. Information on the personnel and operation of this office is slight. Besides Ch’en Ai, who inspired its founding and who supervised its activities at least in the beginning, other members at times included Hu Shao-hsün and Liu Jui-fen. Ch’en and Liu were relatively eminent, which may suggest the importance of the office in Tseng’s eyes.

These offices represented a process of collective development in response to a broad range of specific problems. The Forwarding Department was designed to meet a detail of the political problem of Tseng’s position before he received effective official authority. The money-changing service attempted to solve an aspect of the social problem occasioned by the movement of Tseng’s army. The Rice Office was a partial answer to an economic problem similarly caused by Tseng’s operations. The Loyalty Office attacked the problem of ideological support and public morale in the civil war.

Two important factors associated with the process of elaboration of Tseng’s organization contributed to a new utilization of personnel. First, the growth of an autonomous and diversified organization created opportunities for service which were alternative to those offered by the regular bureaucracy. Because Tseng’s private organization, like the mu-fu from which it developed, was not directly connected to the official bureaucracy through regular channels of official recruitment, the attraction offered by each were distinct. Because employment in Tseng’s organization did not necessarily lead to a regular bureaucratic career, the motive for service in each were distinct.

Second, the formal definition and functional specialization of the divisions of this organization attracted a type of personnel different from that of regular officials. Because service in these divisions stressed technical competence and experience, its rationale was different. Because specialization and functional subordination enhanced the impersonality of this service, its status was different.

These factors are not a matter of quantity, but of emphasis. Whether or not the process of organizational elaboration represented a conscious or coherent policy on Tseng’s part, it produced a situation in which personnel were used in a new way.

THE ROLE OF THE MU-FU

Two fundamental levels in Tseng Kuo-fan’s organization, his mu-fu and his “bureaucracy,” have been distinguished. It is now appropriate to pick

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81 TWCKCC, “Nien-p’u,” 76.
82 For Ch’en Ai see Chap. III, n. 39, and PCCP, 32:27a. For Liu Jui-fen, who was appointed to the office in mid-1861, see Chap. III, n. 30, and HPCC, 32:7b. Hu Shao-hsün was appointed to the office in late 1860, and died in early 1862. PCCP, 41:9b, 10b.
up the thread of the *mu-fu* as it related to the entire context of his operations.

The *mu-fu* was a point of departure in two important respects. As an institutional model established in official practice, it was the starting point for the further evolution under Tseng of an elaborate organizational structure. But, as a persisting element in that structure, it continued to be the starting point for the service of personnel in Tseng's private bureaucracy, and often ultimately in the official bureaucracy itself. For Tseng Kuo-fan, therefore, the *mu-fu* came to serve a dual function. First, it was a personal staff, a privy council of friends, advisors, and consultants. This was the conventional role of the *mu-fu* which has already been examined in Chapter IV, and was not of course unique with Tseng. Second, Tseng's *mu-fu* was a reservoir of personnel and a vehicle for the grooming and development of special talent. Tseng's innovation lay in placing the *mu-fu* in the service of this broader purpose. His contribution was to make the *mu-fu* a means both for the collection of talent and for the deployment of personnel in the suppression of the rebellion.88

In its new role as an agency for the reception and development of talent, the *mu-fu* thus served first as a clearinghouse for personnel:

Formerly he [Tseng Kuo-fan] had instructed and exhorted his followers in the four categories of military affairs, finance, personnel, and secretarial work, truly encompassing affairs of state [shih-wu] in their full range. If a *mu-liao* specialized in secretarial work, he would be thoroughly competent in it. Comparing it to a water-course, the *mu-fu* then was the point of confluence; comparing it to a harvest, the *mu-fu* then was a sown field; therefore he acquired talents in particular abundance.34

This passage conveys a conception of the *mu-fu* quite unlike the popular stereotype of that institution. In contrast to its ideal conception, the fundamental relationship in the *mu-fu* has shifted here: coequal guests have become subordinate trainees. The functions of attracting and enrolling talent, and of the subsequent instruction and training of this new personnel, were both part of the same general process served by the *mu-fu* in Tseng's organization.35

Once brought into the *mu-fu*, the *mu-yu* might undergo a trial process during which his competence and aptitude were observed and his potential was evaluated. After any necessary training or instruction, he could then be placed in service in some segment of Tseng's larger organization. Recognizing qualities of potential generalship in a man after he had undergone the proper scrutiny, Tseng would place him, for instance, in

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88 Lo Erh-kang, 263; Miao Chi'ian-chi, "Tseng Kuo-fan *mu-fu* sheng-k'uang . . ." 328.
35 Miao Chi'ian-chi, "Tseng Kuo-fan *mu-fu* sheng-k'uang . . ." 331.
the General Staff for further development of his ability and experience, with the expectation that he would eventually assume a regular field command. This kind of trial process has already been suggested in Chapter IV to explain Chao Lieh-wen’s initial period of service as a foreign affairs specialist under Tseng. Li Hung-chang went through a similar process when he entered Tseng’s mu-fu.

[Li Hung-chang] at first served as a correspondence secretary, and later worked on drafts of dispatches and memorials. After several months Tseng said to him: “Shao-ch’üan, you have a great aptitude for public documents, and the memorials, reports, letters, and dispatches you have prepared are all superior to those of others. Your career will be extraordinary, and who knows but that ultimately you may surpass your master?” Yet [Li] admitted that formerly he had served a number of commanders without the slightest sense of direction, until now, as if [acquiring the assistance of] a compass, he had gained no mean advantage.

It is not clear precisely what criteria governed Tseng’s evaluation of men’s character and aptitude, but certainly his personal impressions must have counted for a great deal. Tseng’s reputation for effective cultivation and utilization of talent has already been noted in Chapter III. In his diary he recorded a discussion with Li Jung which provides a glimpse of the process as it bore on one of the more promising and important members of his mu-fu:

In the evening I discussed the principles of the General Staff with Li Shen-fu [Li Jung]. On the one hand there is nurturing men of talent; on the other hand there is establishing regulations. One who is concerned with national affairs, while he need not be ashamed of inability in achieving military victory and conquest, ought to be ashamed of inability to nurture talent and establish regulations. The principle of nurturing men of talent has two aspects: one is to know how best to employ men, the other is to transform and train talent. Shen-fu seemed to comprehend—no doubt he possesses high intelligence and a will to manage affairs.

The didactic flavor of this brief lecture expresses Tseng’s commitment to “nurturing talent,” which was served in his case by the mu-fu.

At least one element in Tseng’s evaluation of character was the practice of physiognomy (k’an-hsiang, hsiang-jen, or hsiang-ming) at which he was

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36 Lo Erh-kang, 162. Lo explicitly assigns to Tseng’s General Staff the new role as a training area for future generals in the Hsiang Army, while he identifies the mu-fu as an agency for the collection of talent in the first instance.
38 Tseng, Diary, 739. For Li Jung, see Chap. IV, especially n. 17.
a noted adept. This practice was applied especially in personal interviews he scheduled with junior military officers of the Hsiang Army, as a basis for promotion and reward. This and other background criteria such as family, education, livelihood, and experience, which he noted in these interviews, must have been important bases for his judgment of personnel generally.

Finally, a more objective and rational approach to the evaluation of personnel also existed. Chao Lieh-wen described semi-monthly examinations which Tseng gave to his whole mu-fu. A question in problem form was presented requiring a written response:

The Commander twice each month examines his assembled mu-liao. Today was the second examination, a composition presenting one's views [ts'ei] concerning the question. Question: The way of good government [chih-shih] is encompassed in the two principles of "hard" and "soft" [kang and jou—active and passive]. Lao [Tzu], Chuang [Tzu], and Huai-nan [Tzu] were inclined to use the soft principle. Kuan [Tzu], Shang [Yang], Shen [Tzu, or Shen Pu-hail], and Han [Fei-tzu] were inclined to use the hard principle. Only Confucius in the tradition of the "Two Emperors" [Yao and Shun] and the "Three Kings" [Yu, T'ang, Wen Wang, and Wu Wang—founding kings of the three ancient dynasties] is said to occupy the central position. But why is it that what the Shang-shu says; "weakness in man's character is great; the Tao in man's character is slight," is like what the Taoists say; and, "those of early times killed without mercy; those of times yet to come will kill without mercy," is like what the legalists say? . . . [A further elaboration of this problem follows.] . . . At present the great rebellion is not suppressed. . . . Please discuss [this problem] to assist me to rectify my shortcomings.

39 See, for instance, Wen Lei, "Tseng Kuo-fan hsiang-jen yu-shu" [Tseng Kuo-fan's Skill in Physiognomy], Ch'un-ch'iu, VI, 2, 38–39; and Lin Pin, "Tseng Kuo-fan ti k' an-hsiang, wei-ch'i, yii na-ch'ieh [Tseng Kuo-fan's Practice of Physiognomy, Chess Playing, and Selection of Concubines], Ch'un-ch'iu, VIII, 1, 9–12. In his diary he decided on twelve parameters or indications—six good and six bad —of personality: generous, honest, dignified, strict, stable, balanced; vs. rustic, confused, slow, nervous, temperamental, insubordinate. Tseng, Diary, 651.

40 The following notes from one of these interviews provide a good example of the type of person who appealed most to Tseng:

Hsiao Shang-ch'ien: P'ing-chiang, Ch'ang-shou ssu [Hunan]. Entered the army at Su [?] ferry. Promoted to Platoon Commander at Kuei-ch'i [Kiangsi]. Promoted to Assistant Company Commander at Ch' u-chou [Chekiang]. Father and mother both living. [Awarded] Blue Feather [as] Sergeant. Elder brother studies; younger brother farms. Livelihood from farming. A military man having a cultivated temperament [ju-ya-ch'i]. Well-proportioned body; straight nose; wide-spaced eyebrows. Seemingly useful talent. Assistant Company Commander of the Center Company. Ib id., 647. The combination in a family of careers of study and farming had always been considered both honorable and practical, especially by Tseng who usually recruited his troops from peasant stock. Lo Erh-kang, 80–81. For other examples of such interviews, see Tseng, Diary, 541–554 passim.

41 Chao Lieh-wen, 900–901. 18 June 1862.
This was certainly a rather theoretical question, cast in the framework of traditional political stereotypes. No doubt it was intended to elicit the examinee's command of the fundamentals of the classical Confucian tradition, as well as to discover his ability in written expression.

But a more concrete question on current policy and practice was also a part of this examination:

Presentation of a composition: Discuss whether General To [lung-a] should join in attacking Nanking or go to the aid of Shensi: In the first year [of T'ung-chih] when the great armies gathered at Nanking to seize the [Taiping] chiefs and sweep out their lair, then the [Nien] rebels coveted our Yao and Liu and pressed on Ch'ang-an. His Majesty ordered General To to withdraw from the joint attack with the armies at Nanking and move west to relieve the area within the pass. His lordship the Commander orders his staff [mu-hsiat] to discuss this matter.42

This was a much less structured and more pointed question, calling for a response based on the practical considerations of strategy, not on elaborate Confucian reasoning and phraseology. Implicit in the question, moreover, was a criticism of action already taken by the Court. Not unexpectedly, Chao's answer, following in this vein, was direct, concise, and factual.48 It is hardly necessary to point out that questions of the latter type were not part of the official examination system of the Ch'ing, with its traditional subjects drawn from the "Four Books" and "Five Classics" and its formalistic compositions set in the "eight-legged essay" style.

Chao specified no other details of the operation of this examination process. Consequently its mechanics, including the relationship of the two parts of the examination and the procedure for grading the responses are not revealed. Also, it is not clear how long this practice was in operation, although his initial statement implies that it was a regular one. However, tests were apparently employed in other contexts as well—Tseng mentions tests in a school (shu-yuan) associated with the "Loyalty Office."44 On the following day the examination papers were read by members of the mu-fu, but the function of these tests is not indicated.45

42 Ibid., 906.
43 Ibid., 906–908.
44 Tseng, Diary, 1514. 13 March 1863.
45 Ibid., 1515. Judging from the examination question in this instance, these tests were traditionally oriented. First, a passage from the Analects (section V) was presented for discussion: "I desire neither to boast of goodness, nor to make a display of merit." Second, the composition of a fu was required, on a passage from a poem entitled "I-chii" by T'ao Yuan-ming, which would employ the word t'ao ("to transform, to mold"): "Explain together any doubtful interpretations." Ibid., 1514. It is interesting that the gist of this poem, matching the theme of the passage from the Analects, is a life of humility and simplicity devoted to literary and philosophical discussion. Such was very certainly Tseng's own inclination, which he managed to achieve somewhat even in the course of his active career at this time, as the discussion of his living habits and fondness for literary activity in Chap. IV has made clear.
In summary, three main elements of the evaluation of personnel in the mu-fu can be distinguished. (1) Direct observation by Tseng of a man’s work and behavior in the mu-fu revealed the general level of his intelligence and competence as well as some aspects of his character. Additionally, the visual observations of physiognomy provided further indications of his personality and character. (2) Information on a man’s background, including family, education, experience, and previous performance, was indirect evidence of his character and ability. (3) Formal examinations brought out a man’s intelligence, competence, and ability in written expression.

What is being suggested here is not that Tseng’s utilization of the mu-fu was necessarily modern (although the kind of examination questions he set was certainly unusual for his time). He followed traditional patterns and employed established models—“nurturing talent,” physiognomy, and examinations. However, his application of these devices, and of the mu-fu itself, to evaluate and instruct personnel was rational.

**ADVANCEMENT OF PERSONNEL**

It was suggested above that the mu-fu was the starting point for the continuing advancement of personnel in Tseng’s private bureaucracy and sometimes into the regular bureaucracy at large. Implicit in the mu-fu process was the possible ultimate expectation of a regular bureaucratic career. However, if service in Tseng’s own apparatus was for many persons only a penultimate goal, it nevertheless provided considerable scope for their employment.

Advancement through the mu-fu and beyond proceeded outwards in three stages. The mu-fu itself, as a recruitment and training agency, was the first of these stages. In fact, the process of advancement and promotion had already begun within the mu-fu. Since the various activities it encompassed were not regarded as equally important, mu-yu could be promoted in the mu-fu from one duty to another.46 Chao Lieh-wen is a case in point—the work he did for Tseng grew in importance from the time he entered his mu-fu. The mu-fu served as a kind of placement agency for Tseng’s wider organization. Thus the mu-fu was often only a temporary resting place for personnel, many of whom went on from service under Tseng to careers of particular importance and eminence.47

The second stage of advancement involved the appointment to some position in Tseng’s more formal private bureaucracy. This kind of appointment had a precedent as far back as the Han dynasty, when through the p’i-chiü system of selection, high officials appointed their own subordinates.48 As was the case in this earlier practice, such appointments

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48 Houn, 145–146.
were made under the purview of the central government or the Court.\footnote{Tseng’s collected memorials contain numerous instances of requests directed to the Court for approval of such appointments. For examples, see TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 36, 67, 78, 139, 140, 151, 191, 291. See also Chao Lieh-wen, 1187, where specific action taken on such requests is indicated.}

For this reason, Tseng’s private bureaucracy might be thought of not only as more formal and structured than the \textit{mu-fu} but also as more official—thus, a “semi-official organization”—to the extent that it was more subject to official review and supervision than was the \textit{mu-fu}.

However, this official review must not be construed in any sense to be thorough or complete. The initiative for the selection and transfer of such personnel always lay with Tseng, and the approval sought from the Court was usually an \textit{ex post facto} formality.\footnote{Only in a few cases, especially where personal opposition intervened, were such requests disapproved. For instance, Chin An-ch’ing, a native of Chia-shan, Chekiang, had formerly been impeached by Tseng Kuo-fan. (Chao Lieh-wen, 1085. See TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 540, for circumstances of his impeachment.) When, less than a year later, Tseng Kuo-ch’iian again attempted to recommend him, the action was disapproved by the Court, apparently having been blocked by the opposition of some other officials. (Chao Lieh-wen, 1170, 1187, 1188.) Chin himself attempted to decline and Chao (then serving Tseng Kuo-ch’iian) openly opposed the move as too hasty, but they were unable to prevail against Tseng Kuo-ch’iian’s impatience to go ahead.}

Once appointed, the direct control and authority over these personnel also resided entirely with Tseng, not the Court.\footnote{In a somewhat different case, Chao Lieh-wen spoke to Tseng Kuo-fan in favor of using a worthy and able friend. But apparently there was some lurking resentment (left unspecified) against the man, which made his employment unwise for the time being. Consequently Tseng refused to make the recommendation on the grounds that it was inopportune, although he did not rule out the possibility for the future when the opposition had cooled. Chao Lieh-wen, 844.}

Moreover, the important terminological distinction noted earlier in this chapter indicates the intermediate nature of this “semi-official organization” and its separation from the regular bureaucracy. The components of such a private organization were \textit{chii} and \textit{so}, locally established for limited and specific purposes. The personnel who staffed this organization were known as \textit{yuan}, not \textit{kuan}; the latter was a centrally established permanent official having a general function. Finally, the form of the seal employed by such personnel (\textit{yuan}) was called \textit{kuan-fang}, and had an oblong shape, whereas regular officials (\textit{kuan}) employed \textit{yin} having a square shape.\footnote{Lo Erh-kang, 163.}

It is important to understand here that many persons must be regarded as serving concurrently in the \textit{mu-fu} and the private bureaucracy. Appointment to some post in Tseng’s “semi-official organization” did not necessarily operate to separate a person from Tseng’s immediate controlling authority. This was an important factor in maintaining the integrity of his organization. This interrelationship of the different parts of Tseng’s

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\footnote{Tseng’s collected memorials contain numerous instances of requests directed to the Court for approval of such appointments. For examples, see TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 36, 67, 78, 139, 140, 151, 191, 291. See also Chao Lieh-wen, 1187, where specific action taken on such requests is indicated.}
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\footnote{Lo Erh-kang, 163.}
\footnote{Cf. \textit{Tz’u-hai}, I, 333, and II, 2086. I owe the conception of these distinctions to discussions with Wang Erh-min in Taipei in May 1968.}
\end{footnotesize}
apparatus has been stressed above, particularly with respect to the overlapping areas of the *mu-fu* and Tseng’s more formal staff organization or retinue. In fact, the two were linked both structurally and functionally. It is these features which make it difficult to establish sharp distinctions between the structural and operational boundaries of the *mu-fu* and the organization which developed out of it.

The third stage in the advancement of personnel was recommendation, and possibly subsequent appointment, to official position in the regular bureaucracy. Tseng Kuo-fan, as well as those of his protégés who themselves subsequently achieved high official position, made frequent use of this kind of recommendation.\(^5^8\) Given the extremely selective and deliberate operation of the regular channels of official recruitment and appointment in the Ch'ing period, it is hardly surprising that the recommendation procedure offered an attractive opening for the more rapid advancement of official aspirants, especially those with extraordinary talents which might otherwise be stultified by the rigid orthodoxy of the regular system.\(^5^4\) Since long-standing precedents for the practice of personal selection and recommendation of personnel existed, this situation in itself was really not a new one.\(^5^5\)

But official opposition to the growing practice of special recommendation as it was being employed by Tseng and others in the Taiping period indicates its radical character in another respect:

Hereafter aspirants without the first and second literary degrees ought not to be allowed to purchase regular official *chou* and *hsien* rank. Aspirants without the first and second literary degrees recommended for regular official rank from within the military forces also must undergo actual examination. *Mu-yu* must still comply with previous regulations and not be allowed to purchase official positions in the same province as their *mu-fu* service.\(^5^6\)

Of the three objections stated here, the last was a particularly telling point.

In discussing Chao Lieh-wen’s service with Tseng (in Chapter IV), it was pointed out that recommendation was not employed merely to launch deserving subordinates into new and independent bureaucratic careers. Indeed, the purpose of the procedure was not to detach the person from

\(^5^3\) This practice and some of its ramifications are discussed by Wright, 77–79; and Folsom, 55, 59, 76, 150–151. For some examples of recommendations included in Tseng's memorials, see TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 326, 332, 354, 422, 432–433, 433–434, 439, 569–570.

\(^5^4\) John Watt, "Leadership Criteria in Late Imperial China," 20 and 27, particularly emphasizes the narrowness and exclusiveness of official recruitment through the examination system.

\(^5^5\) Through the *p'i-chü* system of the Han dynasty it seems that large numbers of persons entered official service after first receiving direct appointment by superior officials to minor positions. Houn, 138, 146; Chang Ch'ün-ming, 31–32.

\(^5^6\) Chao Lieh-wen, 1171, quoting the response of the Board of Civil Office to the memorial of a censor.
his patron’s service but rather to enhance his value in that service, and
those who were thus recommended by Tseng did not necessarily cease to
serve him. It was just for this reason that jurisdictional disputes among
officials could and did arise through competition for continued control
over the disposition of such subordinates. Therefore, this continued at-
tachment of an official to his patron’s organization was often both the
result and the purpose of the application of the recommendation pro-
cedure under Tseng.

In spite of official resistance, liberalization in the employment of per-
sonnel received growing support and acceptance in practice. Apologists
for the new measures appealed both to the flexible spirit of traditional
precedents and to a practical and sometimes even modern rationale.
Hsueh Fu-ch’eng, for instance, suggested that famous officials from Lin
Tse-hsii on had relied on their mu-yu’s special knowledge of the strengths
and weaknesses of China and the western nations, and that this had dis-
tinguished their spirit of loyalty. He therefore asked that, following prece-
dents from the Han through the Ch’ing, governors and governor-generals
be urged to specially recommend for substantive appointment mu-fu
personnel possessing exceptional talents, regardless of their previous offi-
cial status. Tseng himself was most concerned with the dearth of quali-
fied officials in areas devastated by the war. After ten years of war in
Anhwei there were only two prefects and two magistrates left and expect-
tant officials were very few. Appointments were urgently needed to restore
the people’s confidence and soothe their anxiety in the midst of long-
endured suffering: “If we must still blindly adhere to the old regulations,
and are bound by the statutes without exhibiting the slightest accommo-
dation in the law, then at present there are almost no personnel available
for employment, and in the future it will be difficult to acquire men’s
services.”

Tseng was certainly not unaware of the rather radical character of his
consequent proposal to make ad hoc arrangements for the employment of
official personnel and specifically to request substantive appointment of

57 Tseng was in competition with his own most eminent protege Li Hung-chang
for the services of talented personnel. In one case, Tseng wrote thirteen letters to
Li demanding that he relinquish the services of a subordinate official to him, but Li
stubbornly resisted by memorializing the Court to detain the man in question.
(Li was then Governor of Kiangsu and formally under Tseng’s jurisdiction, a
situation which was in itself an example of the continued subordination of officials
to their patrons.) Tseng became so angry at this insubordination that he threatened
to impeach Li, to request that the award to Li of the Yellow Riding Jacket be
rescinded, and to remove him from his post, but he was deterred from this drastic
action by news of Li’s successes. Chao Lieh-wen, 1226.
58 Wang Yen-hsi and Wang Shu-min, eds., Huang-Ch’ing Tao-Hsien-T’ung-
Kuang tsou-i [Memorials of the Tao-kuang, Hsien-feng, T’ung-chih, and Kuang-hsi
Reigns of the Ch’ing Dynasty] (Taiwan: 1969), IV, 123.
60 Ibid.
those who exhibited exceptional talent and ability in this service. But he felt that “even if [this measure] departs somewhat from established regulations, still it does not violate the spirit of the law.”  

Abuse of the practice by other officials provided cause for continued opposition to the system. However, some erosion of the resistance of the Court seems eventually to have taken place. By 1869 a censor was complaining of the recommendation of meritorious military officers to civil official ranks, the advancement of merely personal clients and relatives, and the excessive numbers of such recommendations. He asked that greater care be exercised in evaluating these recommendations in the future: only those persons who had managed secretarial work and civil personnel in general staffs should be recommended for civil rank; the rest should be promoted to military rank. Of course, the expression of these objections was as much a reflection of the expanding scope and prevalence of the practice as it was a sign of a defensive stance of partial accommodation or even retreat by the Court.

In Tseng Kuo-fan’s mu-fu, many persons were started on their way to bureaucratic careers as officials. For many others, Tseng’s private bureaucracy offered the real alternative of a new professional career. As this organization was much more extensive than the conventional mu-fu from which it developed, the scope for such careers was that much greater. Its pragmatic emphasis on experience and competence, and its functional diversification, encouraged specialization. Those who, after having received this experience and training did go on to a bureaucratic career, had an adulterating effect on the regular bureaucracy of officials prepared in the traditional manner.

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61 Ibid.
62 Cf. problems of nepotism reported in Ta-Ch'ing Wen-tsung Hsien-huang-ti shih-lu, VIII, 5212. 15 August 1860.
63 Huang-Ch'ing Tao-Hsien-T'ung-Kuang tsou-i, II, 1069–1070.
VI
Tseng Kuo-fan's Financial Administration

With the rise of the Taiping Rebellion in 1850, both the Ch'ing dynasty and the traditional state system were confronted by a crisis of the first magnitude. The gravity of this crisis was compounded because it affected not only the military, but the fiscal and political structures as well. Moreover, the large and extraordinary expenses of the suppression of the rebellion came in a period of dynastic decline aggravated by the impact of the West. Financial reserves had been exhausted in combatting internal rebellion beginning with the great White Lotus Rebellion at the end of the eighteenth century and external invasion coming with the Opium War only ten years before the Taipings. The land and poll taxes which constituted the regular source of revenue had been rigidly fixed since the early part of the dynasty and could not be expanded without alienating the peasantry just when competing appeals for their support were being made by the Taipings. Yet new demands were being placed on these revenues by growing rebellion and renewed pressure from the West. The traditional fiscal system was proving to be permanently inadequate for modern requirements, and the destruction caused by the rebellion reduced even the conventional sources of revenue.

The inflexibility of the revenue system and the insufficiency of the traditional sources of revenue during the Ch'ing have been pointed out by students of the period.1 However, our purpose here is to suggest that the problem was not limited merely to a material insufficiency of funds, but included as well an equally important institutional incapacity for organizational mobilization. Decentralization and immobility stood in the way of an effective government response. Tseng Kuo-fan, chiefly responsible for the suppression of the rebellion, undertook a process of centralization and mobilization in order to overcome these obstacles and to rectify his weak position. The organization which he created was regionally aligned, but he transcended provincial boundaries to develop supraprovincial direction and organizational autonomy at the expense of central monarchical authority.

The problem was not simply one of national versus regional interests

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and authority, or of a national centralization versus provincial decentralization:

The practices of modern public finance were then far below the horizon in what was still essentially a medieval state. Any war that arose must pay its own way in whatever manner was possible. . . . Had the modern system of transferring the burden of war to another generation through the issue of government obligations been known at this time, and had the government been sufficiently centralized, it is fairly certain that the Taiping Rebellion might have been crushed within a year after it gained headway.2

Perhaps there are grounds on which to quibble with some aspects of this judgment. Nonetheless, the principal obstacle facing an effective national effort to suppress a threat of such magnitude was the rigid institutional framework within which that effort must operate and the piecemeal form imposed on any such undertaking. The problems associated with suppressing the rebellion were literally those of mobilization—to make mobile a static situation. A more flexible traditional system might have facilitated a more immediate and effective effort, and have precluded a process of mobilization outside the auspices of the central government.

The traditional fiscal system of the Ch'ing was decentralized and inflexible. Beneath the façade of the central government, fiscal control and revenue collection tended to devolve upon the provinces individually. The Board of Revenue (hu-pu), the division of the central government responsible for state finance, was organized parallel to provincial divisions, in fourteen departments, for convenience in accounting for tax receipts from the separate provinces. Any other functions of a nonprovincial nature were only arbitrarily distributed among these departments.3 Because communications were slow and difficult, central control of provincial revenues was minimal and somewhat opportunistic. Provinces close to the capital were rated disproportionately high in the scale of land tax assessed.4 Furthermore, no distinction was made between the sources of local, provincial, and central revenues, which in fact were one and the same.5 The result was a constant competition among the three levels for the same revenues, and a constant uncertainty in receipts at all levels.

2 Hail, 174.
4 Shansi, Shantung, Chihli, and Hunan were rated first, second, third, and fourth, while Kwangtung, a rich producer, was rated tenth. H. B. Morse, The Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire (New York: Longmans, Green, 1908), 92.
5 Li Chuan Shih, 58.
An accounting of all revenues and expenditures passed through the Board of Revenue, which thus had final authority over appropriation of funds. This theoretical exercise of central control often became a mere formality, however, and failed to compensate for the decentralization prevailing in the collection of revenue. In practice, a complex system of remittances was arranged:

In theory, everything was subject to the control of the emperor—land, property, and revenue. In practice, the revenue was assigned piecemeal from certain sources of collection to certain defined heads of imperial expenditure and had to be remitted independently for the purpose assigned.6

Such a clumsy means of allocation of revenue prevented efficient and flexible operation, and made central direction of expenditures difficult and uncertain at best. At worst, as will become clear in examining Tseng Kuo-fan's efforts to acquire funds for his campaigns, such central direction was all too easily thwarted locally.

Finally, the permanent budget of the central government (essentially a list of fixed appropriations for civil, military, and court salaries and expenses of the central government) was static and unresponsive either to long-term change or to momentary or sudden emergencies.7 Extraordinary devices were necessarily resorted to in a crisis.

In the process of mobilization, financial arrangements were vital to the success of all other undertakings. Tseng Kuo-fan soon recognized the central problem which confronted him: "In the minor upheavals of the age, the command of troops is more difficult than fund raising. In the great upheavals of the age, fund raising is much more difficult than the command of troops. Of the myriad difficulties surrounding me, this funding of immediate plans is the central one."8 The decentralization and stasis of the traditional fiscal system, coupled with the increasingly urgent demands on the depleted sources of revenue, made the acquisition of funds and the search for new sources of revenue a constant activity for Tseng.

Commissioned by the Court to raise a militia to fight the Taipings, Tseng was also responsible for the financial maintenance of this effort. In the absence of any central financial backing, this burden devolved upon the provinces in which he was fighting or exercised some control. The

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6 Ibid., 59. Cf. Morse, 113; and Sun, 205–214. James T. K. Wu also points out this system of revenue, but he notes it as a supposedly centralizing factor. However, his distinction is largely a formalistic one, and does nothing to impeach the conclusion that the fiscal system was fundamentally decentralized in its operation. Wu, "The Impact of the Taiping Rebellion upon the Manchu Fiscal System," Pacific Historical Review, XIX (1950), 265–275.


problems of such local finance were compounded by the usual jealousies of local officials and their opposition to such military and financial activity in competition with their own. These obstacles tended to limit severely the size and scope of his activity. In the most concrete way, the size of his forces was restricted by the number of men he could afford to pay.

Without continuous central financial support, Tseng's fiscal planning was effectively limited to one month in advance; and the financing of his operations was worked out practically on the spur of the moment. Yet Tseng desired funds for two or three months' expenses on hand if he was to advance into enemy territory confidently. Although Tseng's new militia was supposed to be well and promptly paid, in contrast to the notorious failures in what was already a low standard of pay in the old government armies, its pay was frequently in arrears. This situation became the subject of repeated pleas by Tseng to the Court, but to little avail:

Rations [for 25,000 men] are in arrears either two or three months, much like the conditions in Hupeh in the summer of 1854. We have no means to rectify the situation. I really cannot bear to trouble the Palace with these problems, but when it concerns the general situation, I also dare not fail to lay before my Sovereign the actual situation in the army.

Under these circumstances Tseng was led to exploit regular as well as extraordinary sources of revenue over which he would have some control, and to develop a financial organization which could ensure his armies sufficient support, provide for new emergencies, and allow him to expand operations.

**Financial Mobilization**

Tseng Kuo-fan's financial activities in the suppression of the rebellion fell into three periods: (1) 1853–1858, from Tseng's first appointment to raise a militia in Hunan to his resumption of the campaign following his temporary retirement in 1857; (2) 1858–1860, to his appointment as governor-general; (3) 1860–1864, to the recovery of Nanking and the end of the rebellion. This periodization reflects the evolution of his fiscal operations in several respects: in the nature and source of revenues; in the size and maintenance of forces; and (most important) in the structure of his financial administration. The rationale for this division, especially as it relates to fiscal organization, will become clear subsequently. The first and second periods, to 1860, are the particular concern of the present section.

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10 TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 84. 28 October 1854.

The relatively limited income that Tseng was able to command supported an army of only moderate size at a fairly static level through most of the first period of Tseng’s activities up to 1858. His forces grew through the second period, but reached a relatively stable state, though at a substantially higher level, in the third period after 1860.

**Table 3**

**Allocation of Funds Reported by Tseng Kuo-fan: 1853–1860**
(Compiled from TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” passim 28–358)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HF 3/10/24 (11/24/1853)</td>
<td>100,000 taels</td>
<td>preparation of marine forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/2/15 (3/13/1854)</td>
<td>80,000 taels/month</td>
<td>estimated for 10,000 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/7/16 (8/9/1854)</td>
<td>60,000–70,000 taels/month</td>
<td>13,000 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/9/7 (10/28/1854)</td>
<td>80,000 taels</td>
<td>one month’s expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/2/27 (9/13/1855)</td>
<td>240,000 taels</td>
<td>three months’ expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/4/1 (5/16/1855)</td>
<td>10,000 (+) marine and land forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/9/5 (10/15/1855)</td>
<td>10,000 (+) troops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/1/23 (2/28/1856)</td>
<td>60,000 taels/month</td>
<td>11,000 men in Kiangsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/4/21 (5/24/1856)</td>
<td>Total Kiangsi forces (Tseng, provincial garrisons, and marine forces) = 25,000 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/10/11 (11/8/1856)</td>
<td>3000 troops being trained in Hunan for relief of Kiangsi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/12/23 (1/18/1857)</td>
<td>50,000 (+) troops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 8/8/24 (9/30/1858)</td>
<td>60,000 taels/month</td>
<td>12,000 men in various units under Tseng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 10/8/23 (10/7/1860)</td>
<td>300,000 (+) taels/month</td>
<td>50,000 troops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tseng reported that during the period approximately from the start of his operations in 1853 through 1856 he spent less than 2,700,000 taels.¹² This sum provided for an army which remained at somewhat more than ten thousand men throughout that period, requiring a monthly support of about sixty thousand taels (see Table 3). Such an army was small by the prevailing standards of both the central government and the Taiping, and although his troops were well paid, their monthly support was likewise relatively small. Only by 1857 had Tseng’s army grown to fifty thousand men, still a rather small force.

The total expenditure by the central government for the suppression of the rebellion as of 30 April 1853, reported as 27,000,000 taels, contrasts sharply with the total expenditure reported by Tseng for the more than three-year period through 1856.¹³ Inasmuch as the first clash between government forces and the Taiping rebels in Kwangsi occurred in late 1850, this large expenditure, ten times the amount spent by Tseng, must have covered a period of less than three years. Furthermore, considering the local character of the early stages of the rebellion, this sum must have been expended on operations initially no larger than those of Tseng’s own later operations which were supposedly better paid. The total expenditure reported by the Board of Revenue in July 1853 had risen to 29,630,000 taels, an increase in three months equal to the total expenditure by Tseng for more than three years.¹⁴ Although the government had many more men in the field in 1853, such a staggering disparity must point either to a remarkable hardship and economy on the part of Tseng, a hypothesis belied by Tseng’s known cautiousness and emphasis on well-equipped and well paid troops, or to corruption in military supply and recruiting among the regular government forces on the order of that which developed during the White Lotus Rebellion, a hypothesis supported by what is known of typical Chinese military history.¹⁵

In 1867 Tseng submitted a general account of his expenditures in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. For the entire period of his operations of nearly twelve years duration, from 1853 to 1864, he reported a

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¹² Ibid., 801. Cf. an earlier comparable report, ibid., 334. By early 1858, that is through the first period of his activities noted above, Tseng had spent roughly 3,000,000 taels, but this period included the duration of his leave when he ceased to handle expenditures. Ibid., 283, 801.


¹⁴ Beal, 18. This figure indicates the government was spending 800,000–900,000 taels per month, which roughly agrees with the reported sum of 27,000,000 taels for less than three years’ operations.

¹⁵ See Franz Michael, The Taiping Rebellion, 10–11, 16–17. Extrapolating Tseng’s expenditures on the basis of a monthly requirement of 60,000 taels, for the forty-month period from HF 3/9 to HF 6/12, yields 2,400,000 taels, which, allowing for the higher initial expenses of equipping the marine force, provides an approximate check on his reported total expenditure for that period.
total expenditure of less than 21,400,000 taels.\textsuperscript{16} This sum did not include arrears in pay still owed in 1867 for the period before the fall of Nanking in 1864, amounting to almost five million taels.\textsuperscript{17} If paid, this amount would have brought the final sum to more than twenty-six million taels. Compare this total cost of Tseng’s operations to the total cost of the rebellion in military expenditures of all kinds estimated at 200–300 million taels.\textsuperscript{18} Tseng’s share was probably a mere one-tenth of this expenditure. In comparison, regular military appropriations of the central government amounted to approximately twenty-two million taels annually, roughly two-thirds of the total annual permanent budget.\textsuperscript{19}

Tseng’s armies were relatively small, but they came eventually to hold the primary responsibility for the suppression of the rebellion. By any standard, the amount of financial support they required was small. The totally ineffective imperial armies absorbed vastly greater funds. Such a comparison underscores the critical significance of the difficulties experienced by Tseng in the acquisition of funds. Nonetheless, that Tseng was able to command the revenue he did indicates an extraordinary circumvention of the normal channels of finance and a novel assumption of authority on his part.

Tseng came to rely almost exclusively on the Yangtze provinces for the

\textsuperscript{16} TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao.” 802. 13 March 1867. Tseng divided his accounting into four periods, as follows (amounts to the nearest whole unit):

\begin{itemize}
  \item I HF 3/9—HF 6/12 (already reported 24 June 1860, see \textit{ibid.}, 334.):
    \begin{itemize}
      \item received: silver — 2,891,419 taels
        \item rice — 53,749 piculs
    \end{itemize}
  \item paid out:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item silver — 2,667,371 taels
      \item rice — 3,799 piculs
    \end{itemize}
  \item on hand:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item silver — 291,394 taels
      \item (includes converted value of grain)
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item II HF 7/1 — HF 7/2/20 (Tseng began leave):
    \begin{itemize}
      \item paid out: silver — 291,394 taels
        \begin{itemize}
          \item (Tseng on leave HF 7/2 — HF 8/6)
        \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item III HF 8/6 — HF 10/4 (end of leave to appointment as governor-general):
    \begin{itemize}
      \item received: silver — 1,691,676 taels
        \item cash — 1,019 strings
    \end{itemize}
  \item paid out:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item silver — 1,627,046 taels
      \item cash — 1,019 strings
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item IV HF 10/5 — TC 3/6 (appointment as governor-general to recovery of Nanking):
    \begin{itemize}
      \item received: silver — 16,854,590 taels
        \item cash — 965,552 strings
    \end{itemize}
  \item paid out:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item silver — 16,763,775 taels
      \item cash — 872,863 strings
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textit{Ibid.}, 801–802.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, 803.

\textsuperscript{18} Beal, 82.

\textsuperscript{19} Shao-kwan Chen, 33. Alternatively, Wade, writing in 1851, calculated the expenses of the military establishment, including administration, as nearly thirty-one million taels. T. F. Wade, “The Army of the Chinese Empire: Its Two Great Divisions, the Bannermen or National Guard, and the Green Standard or Provincial Troops; Their Organization, Locations, Pay, Condition, etc.,” \textit{The Chinese Repository}, XX (1851), 416.
bulk of his regular income. This region, and more particularly the central Yangtze provinces in which Tseng’s forces were raised and in which he did most of his campaigning, was economically vital and militarily strategic:

Kiangsi, Hupeh, and Hunan . . . formed the military and economic heart of the nation. At all costs these three provinces must be held, for, in the imagery of the Kanwang, they formed the head of the serpent and the rich coastal provinces the tail; the head must be preserved, whatever the fate of the tail.20

Tseng appreciated this strategic consideration as well as the practical expedient of depending on adjacent territories, and made it his policy to secure this area and develop it as his source of support.21 During the early period of his activities, Tseng reported receiving subsidies from Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Szechwan, and Shensi.22 In later years, as Tseng worked his way down the river, Anhwei, Kiangsu, and Chekiang became significant sources of support as well; and, as the nature of his revenue base shifted, the Yangtze provinces assumed the most important place in his supply of funds.

It is hardly necessary to point out that Tseng Kuo-fan was automatically precluded from exploiting the sources of revenue on which the Taipings relied most heavily, that is plunder. Such activity would have been self-defeating for the government, as it was in the end for the Taipings, and so far as possible Tseng scrupulously avoided any actions which might alienate the people. Although the Taipings fielded large armies, probably far larger than those of Tseng’s forces, their zeal was sustained especially in the later periods by the appeal of plunder.23 Tseng’s armies were relatively small and their morale was sustained by discipline, high pay, common loyalties, and ideological indoctrination which such activity would have destroyed.

Naturally, Tseng turned first to the conventional sources of regular finance, the provincial treasury and direct grants-in-aid from other provinces.24 The first of these sources was probably at least sufficient to initiate the training of militia in Hunan. But the burden imposed by this extraordinary wartime activity coupled with the regular financial respon-

20 Hail, 225.
21 TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 92. See also Hail, 210, 232.
22 TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 334. See Table 4 for the distribution of Tseng’s requests for interprovincial subsidies, and Table 5 for his reported receipts of subsidies.
23 Wu, 271; Hail, 174-175.
24 See Li Chuan Shih, 51–55, for a description of the system of interprovincial financial aid. Strangely, E-tu Zen Sun, although making a passing reference to this practice, nowhere deals with it in what is an otherwise apparently thorough treatment of the operation of the traditional fiscal system. See Sun, 205.
sibilities of the province and the recent destruction caused by the Taipings in Hunan had depleted the provincial treasury by 1854.25

Tseng Kuo-fan turned next to financial assistance from other provinces for support of his operations. Requests for such aid were embodied in memorials to the throne, to be forwarded to the Board of Revenue for action. But the province from which the subsidy was sought could easily procrastinate or, especially in this period of upheaval, make excuses for the failure to provide support. In any case, securing such assistance was a lengthy process and the outcome always uncertain.26 Table 4 shows that Tseng made requests for subsidies throughout the first two periods of his financial activities with indifferent success.

Table 5 shows that he continued to receive interprovincial aid in scattered remittances during this time, but the total income from this source was relatively small.

In his desperate search for funds, Tseng resorted to interprovincial financial support in a disguised and circuitous form. In May 1855 he proposed that salt produced in Chekiang be shipped to Kiangsi, which had been cut off from its source of supply by the Taipings, to be sold there, the proceeds going to support the army.27 As Kiangsi was properly part of the Huainan salt-marketing area, accounts had to be juggled for the three areas. The system Tseng proposed was equivalent to a direct subsidy from Chekiang in silver. The degree to which he found it necessary to devise these rationalizations reflects the rigidity of the fiscal system. The government was characteristically slow to act, and five months later he had still received no salt.28

Almost from the beginning, Tseng found conventional revenue sources insufficient or unavailable, and turned to emergency measures. So-called "contributions" (the sale of titles, offices, and literary degrees) offered the most immediate and lucrative source of revenue. Originally intended as a temporary expedient only, this source had been tapped by the government early in the dynasty and intermittently since that time, whenever cash reserves were short.29 Revenue from contributions fluctuated widely depending on response to fund-raising campaigns, and was therefore always an uncertain and unreliable source.30 The practice was em-

25 TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 33, 36, 82.
26 With reference to some of the problems experienced by the Board of Revenue in exacting compliance from provincial administrations in the matter of revenue allocations, see Sun, 214–221.
27 Ibid., 138–139.
28 Ibid., 166.
29 Beal, 19–23, gives a brief history of this practice. That contributions were an accepted adjunct to state finance is shown by the existence of an "Office of Contributions" (chüan-na-fang) as a subdivision of the Board of Revenue. Sun, 190. The definitive study of this practice is Hsü Ta-ling, Ch'ing-tai chüan-na chih-tu [The Contribution System of the Ch'ing Period] (Peking: 1950); in particular see 13–22 and 59–76.
30 Beal, 20–21; Wu, 273.
### Table 4

**Tseng Kuo-fan’s Requests for Provincial Subsidies: 1854–1860**

(Compiled from TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” *passim* 28–366)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/2/15</td>
<td>Kwangtung and Szechwan</td>
<td>? (previous request by Governor Lo Ping-chang)</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3/13/1854)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/8/30</td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>80,000 taelss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10/21/1854)</td>
<td>Kwangtung and Szechwan</td>
<td>several 10,000 taelss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 9/4/7</td>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>240,000 taels</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10/28/1854)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/2/27</td>
<td>Fukien</td>
<td>20,000 taels/month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4/13/1855)</td>
<td>Chekiang</td>
<td>20,000 taels/month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>deductions from 1854 tribute grain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/1/23</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>likin levy</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2/28/1856)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/2/21</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>100,000 taels from customs revenue</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3/27/1856)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/4/21</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>previous request repeated</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5/24/1856)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/8/7</td>
<td>Shansi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/5/1856)</td>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/12/23</td>
<td>Kwangtung</td>
<td>40,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/18/1857)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 8/8/24</td>
<td>Szechwan</td>
<td>20,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/30/1858)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 9/8/5</td>
<td>Szechwan</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/1/1859)</td>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shansi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 9/11/17</td>
<td>Chekiang</td>
<td>40,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12/10/1859)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 10/8/23</td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>80,000 taels/month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10/7/1860)</td>
<td>Hupeh and Hunan</td>
<td>? (a previous request)</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>50,000 taels/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>20,000 taels/month</td>
<td>for three months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(commuted tribute grain)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 10/10/4</td>
<td>Kiangsi</td>
<td>20,000 taels (command tribute grain)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11/16/1860)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* X = partially unsuccessful; O = totally unsuccessful.
### Table 5

**Provincial Subsidies Reported Received by Tseng Kuo-fan: 1853–1860**  
(Compiled from TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," passim 28–359)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HF 3/10/24 (11/24/1853)</td>
<td>Kwangtung: earmarked for Kiang-nan ta-ying, detained in Hunan</td>
<td>40,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 3/11/26 (12/26/1853)</td>
<td>Hunan tribute grain converted to local use</td>
<td>20,000–30,000 piculs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 4/8/30 (10/21/1859)</td>
<td>Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Szechwan</td>
<td>55,000 taels, 60,000 taels, 40,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/2/27 (4/13/1855)</td>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>120,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 5/9/5 (10/15/1855)</td>
<td>Fukien, Chekiang</td>
<td>20,000 taels, 10,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/5/23 (6/25/1856)</td>
<td>Chekiang</td>
<td>20,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 6/12/23 (1/18/1857)</td>
<td>Shansi</td>
<td>30,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 8/8/24 (9/30/1858)</td>
<td>Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi</td>
<td>20,000 taels (per month?), 20,000 taels (per month?), 17,000 taels (per month?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 9/11/17 (12/10/1859)</td>
<td>Kiangsi, Shensi</td>
<td>30,000 taels/month (how long?), 10,000 taels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF 10/8/23 (10/7/1860)</td>
<td>Kiangsi likin</td>
<td>90,000 taels (for HF 10/7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employed more exhaustively from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and exploited fully during the Taiping Rebellion, but the central government naturally handled this source most cautiously.81

Through the provincial authorities, however, a less cautious policy was pursued. In his eloquent appeal for support from all quarters in the struggle with the Taipings, Tseng promised rewards for contributors:

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81 In an edict of 30 April 1853, all provinces were ordered to solicit contributions; a province raising 100,000 taels was to be allowed to increase its civil and military chü-jen (provincial graduate) quota by one; a local unit of government (chün, chou, or t'ing) contributing 2000 taels was to be allowed to increase its sheng-yuan (local graduate) quota by one. These added quotas could be extended to several instances as a cumulative process. *T'ai-ping T'ien-kuo shih-liao*, 275.
If anyone devoted to public duty and humanity will contribute silver for military funds, for up to one thousand taels he will be awarded a Treasury receipt with commission (shih-shou pu-chao); for above one thousand taels, I will specially memorialize requesting special rewards (yu-hsii).\(^{32}\)

Already, in December 1853, Tseng had requested that he be allowed to solicit contributions for official ranks directly, and to present lists to the government for immediate award of commissions.\(^{33}\) He pointed out that formerly contributions had fallen off because of the long wait, three or four years, in receiving commissions.

Early in 1854, in order to further stimulate this source of revenue, Tseng requested four thousand blank certificates (k'ung-pai chih-chiao) for use in raising funds in Hunan, Kiangsi, and Szechwan.\(^{34}\) Several months later, because of delays in receiving the certificates, he made a second request for an additional two thousand blank certificates for distribution in Kiangsi and Szechwan, to be issued first to contributors who held receipts for contributions already reported to the Board of Revenue but who had yet to receive their commissions in return.\(^{35}\) By setting this priority, he hoped to prevent the enthusiasm of potential contributors from waning. From this time, those who purchased official rank were issued blank certificates, on which their names were entered on the spot, but those who purchased actual office had to be reported for separate consideration by the government.\(^{36}\) To further encourage contributions, a twenty percent discount in exchanging copper cash for silver in making contributions was enacted, and was gradually extended throughout the Yangtze provinces.\(^{37}\)

Virtually from the time he first turned to this source, contributions assumed the most important place in the financial support of Tseng's

\(^{32}\) TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 149.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 31.
\(^{34}\) Tseng requested that 4000 blank certificates be issued by the Board of Revenue and the Imperial Academy (Kuo-tzu-chien)—one-half for official ranks (chih-hsien) and one-half for Imperial Academy students (chien-sheng)—for sale in Hunan, Kiangsi, Szechwan. Each of the three persons selected by Tseng to solicit contributions in these provinces, and Tseng himself, was to receive 1000 of these certificates. Tseng was particularly anxious that all funds so raised be remitted directly to him so that no separate use would be made of them. Ibid., 37. 13 March 1854.

There was a precedent for this practice in 1853 when in order to stimulate more contributions, Lei I-hsien proposed to make immediate awards to contributors. The new system of blank certificates, though temporary, had met with the Court's approval, Beal, 22–23.

\(^{35}\) TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 59. 8 August 1859. Between October 1853 and June 1854 Tseng had issued a total of 348 receipts to contributors (chüan-sheng) against future award of commissions.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 191.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 244. 8 November 1856. This was a discount from 2000 to 1600 cash, in Kiangsu, Kiangsi, Anhwei, Honan, Hupeh, and Hunan.
operations. In early 1854 Tseng reported that he relied entirely on contributions for military funds.\footnote{Ibid., 36.} Two years later the situation remained much the same, and in late 1856 he was still making requests for blank certificates.\footnote{On 8 November 1856 Tseng requested 2000 certificates of various kinds, to raise contributions in Hunan for a new force of 3000 men: 1000 certificates for chien-sheng, 800 for official ranks, and 200 for other titles and decorations. Ibid., 244.} Thus before likin succeeded, contributions were the principal source of extraordinary revenue exploited by Tseng in his attempt to mobilize financial support.

By the latter half of 1856, it seems clear that Tseng’s sources of funds—contributions, commutation of tribute, and salt sales—were drying up or proving inadequate to support expanding military operations. This predicament was reflected in frequent arrears in pay to his army, the urgent detention of financial personnel at their posts, and attempts to open new sources.\footnote{Ibid., 187, 191–192, 206, 229.} The most promising new source was likin.

Liken (li-chin) was an internal commercial tax mainly on goods in transit, levied at frequent barriers along the main trade routes within and between provinces and on the stationary establishments of merchants. The name originally meant a levy of one-thousandth of a tael per tael valuation, but the rate soon increased. Likin tapped a source of revenue heretofore largely neglected in the traditional revenue system, commercial wealth. At least in the beginning, it was regarded by the government as merely a modification of the contributions system, a view which the originators of likin, who developed it from experiments with various contributions schemes, seem to have perpetrated.\footnote{See Beal’s study, chap. III, for a description of likin.} In this respect, it is significant that in either case the money often came from the same source—the merchants.

In view of the inherently ephemeral and unreliable character of contributions, it is not surprising that Tseng should have eagerly sought a more permanent and stable revenue source, which likin offered. In early 1856, Tseng proposed that the likin tax be levied in the as-yet-unexploited but wealthy Shanghai area, the proceeds to support his forces in Kiangsi.\footnote{TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 187.} While Kiangsi, which suffered extensively at the hands of the Taipings, did not offer a suitable basis for taxation, Kiangsu had yet to be invaded. He was so enthusiastic about its possibilities that he suggested that in the future likin might provide for armies other than those in Kiangsi, a rather optimistic comment considering the straits in which he had found himself for so long.

However, although Tseng reiterated his request for the Shanghai likin,
action was slow in coming.\textsuperscript{43} In January 1858 the situation remained approximately unchanged from that which had prevailed two years before, leading Tseng to complain that “solicitation of contributions and devious advances are a tortuous maintenance.”\textsuperscript{44} It was only after 1860 that likin eclipsed all other forms of revenue, to provide a new and secure foundation for a substantial expansion of Tseng’s operations. Before that time (the first two periods distinguished above), contributions supplied the major source of his revenue.

This date is significant. Likin could be effectively exploited only by direct provincial authority, which Tseng did not have before 1860. When he first sought to draw on his source, therefore, likin hardly differed from regular provincial subsidies. The great disadvantages of the provincial subsidies lay in their subordination to an inflexible fiscal system and their vulnerability to local interference. As it developed, likin became a matter of separate and individual provincial administration, possessively preserved as such against outside inspection.\textsuperscript{45}

But if likin came to be characterized by its singular independence from accountability to the central government, solicitation of contributions was at least a significant step in that direction. As Tseng refined the system before he acquired control over likin, contributions were much less subject to the control of either the central or the provincial governments than were conventional revenues. We have seen that Tseng solicited contributions directly. For this source he was dependent on the central government only for the supply of the blank certificates, and was not dependent on the provincial governments in any respect. Regular provincial subsidies depended on the approval of both levels of government. Apart, therefore, from the question of the relative potential of the various revenue sources, the evolution of Tseng’s financial mobilization reflects his growing autonomy in this area, and indicates the trend toward solutions outside the conventional channels of official practice.

**A NEW FISCAL ORGANIZATION**

The genesis of Tseng Kuo-fan’s organization may be discovered in the predicament in which he was placed upon receiving the commission of the Court to take charge of local militia forces to fight the Taipings. Besides the obstacles presented by the static economic framework within which he operated, there were related political problems. Because the precise nature of his authority was not clear, his official position was ambiguous. As an officer specially commissioned by the Court, he was out-

\textsuperscript{43}~\textit{Ibid.}, 191, 229. No action had been taken on Tseng’s proposal by 5 September 1856.

\textsuperscript{44}~\textit{Ibid.}, 283.

side the regular administration of the province in which he was supposed to operate; and without the cooperation of the provincial officials he found it difficult to function effectively and impossible to command the provincial revenue.\textsuperscript{46} Tseng complained frankly and bitterly to the Court of his deficient authority:

All the commands which I have received—to relieve Hupeh, to relieve Anhwei, to prepare naval artillery, to tranquilize the Yangtze area— all have been palace letters [\textit{ting-chi}]. Never has a clear imperial edict [\textit{yü-chih}] been handed down. [Consequently] there has been frequent ridicule and criticism abroad: Some say that I have myself asked to launch a campaign, and ought not to receive official funds. Some say that I have not received a clear mandate, and ought not to be styled an imperial commissioner. Some say that I have already been dismissed from office, and ought not alone memorialize on affairs.\textsuperscript{47}

Sometimes his appointments and the documents issued under his seal were questioned by local officials—this had an especially detrimental effect when the validity of the certificates of title issued in exchange for contributions was impugned.\textsuperscript{48}

One can speculate that if the fiscal system had been centralized, the problem of his official authority would not have arisen for Tseng. Under the existing circumstances, however, he required a secure provincial economic base, yet this was denied him by his lack of unequivocal official status. The only way he was able to break through this vicious circle was to create a personal apparatus which could rectify so far as possible the shortcomings of his position. Ultimately neither a private organization nor official authority would alone have been sufficient—only a combination of the two was to prove completely effective in achieving his aims.

Because he encountered considerable difficulties in all his attempts to raise funds across provincial boundaries, Tseng was led to organize his financial operations according to these boundaries. Although he was made continually aware of the constraints imposed by this approach, in practice he still regarded provincial boundaries as the most expedient divisions

\textsuperscript{46} TWCKCC, \textit{"Tsou-kao,"} 279–280. Tseng's presentation of his quandary is neatly paraphrased by Hall:

First, though he had the rank of a cabinet officer and title of chief commander, his actual power was inferior to that of a provincial \textit{t'ituh}. Second, all the revenues of whatever character must pass through the hands of the regular officials; being but a guest, Tseng could not lay hands on any of these revenues and apply them to the support of his armies. Hence his never-ending worry about securing needed funds. Third, he had four different titles on his seals, all indicating high rank, but not clear enough to connote definite authority in the minds of officials or people.

Hall, 201.

\textsuperscript{47} TWCKCC, \textit{"Tsou-kao,"} 280.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}
for his revenue activities. His original objective, however, Tseng saw as the combined defense of the central Yangtze provinces. Therefore, he sought to develop a supraprovincial fiscal structure to control the allocation (as distinct from the collection) of revenue for the support of his operations. The nature of the revenue sources did not permit the development of supraprovincial collection as well.

The Formative Period, 1853–1858

Because he initially lacked personal and direct control of revenue of any kind, Tseng placed financial deputies in each province in which he intended either to operate directly or to raise funds. These deputies were to serve as liaison with the provincial administration and the gentry in efforts to secure financial support. As his base of operations shifted and expanded across provincial boundaries, his organization also enlarged and accumulated new personnel and new divisions. During this formative period of Tseng's financial operations, his organization evolved in a tentative and somewhat unsystematic fashion:

1. During the initial phase of operations in late 1853 and early 1854, when he was located at Heng-chou in southern Hunan, Tseng personally managed his finances, but deputized T'ao Shou-yü to assist in keeping the accounts.

2. In early 1854 while he was located at Ch'ang-sha, Li Han-chang was appointed to manage financial affairs.

3. From July 1854, as Tseng's forces advanced from the capture of Yueh-chou down river into Hupeh in order to assault Wu-ch'ang, a "Rear Commissariat" (hou-lu liang-t'ai) was established in Ch'ang-sha under Yü Lin. At the same time Wan Yin-kuan was appointed to manage affairs in Hupeh, while Li Han-chang and Cheng Te-chi supervised the financial affairs of the forces in the field.

4. With the recapture of the Wu-han cities in October 1854, a "Supply Office" (chuan-yün chii) was established at Han-k'ou under Hu Tajen, to support the subsequent advance of Tseng's campaign.

5. During 1855 and 1856 while Tseng was campaigning in Kiangsi, he established a Rear Commissariat at Nan-ch'ang under the management of Li Han-chang and Kan Chin.

6. Finally, the Commissariat at Nan-ch'ang was abolished in January 1857, and from this time (the beginning of the seventh year of Hsien-feng) its functions were taken over by the "Kiangsi Provincial Office"
(Kiangsi sheng-chü) under the management of the Kiangsi provincial administration.\(^{52}\)

As this progression of stages clearly suggests, Tseng's organization of financial support followed the course of his campaign through several provinces, but was adjusted to provincial centers. This tendency toward provincial alignment may be seen even more clearly in the evolution of the financial administration of the seven main detachments under Tseng's general direction. All were initially under his direct financial control, but as the field of their operations expanded beyond the confines of a single province, Tseng's financial direction was attenuated as each came under separate provincial organizations—this was true as well for two newer detachments under Tseng, plus those of his two brothers Tseng Kuo-hua and Tseng Kuo-ch'üan.\(^{53}\)

Such localized arrangements were at best a compromise with the circumstances of Tseng's restricted authority and inadequate revenues at this time, and ultimately proved to be unsatisfactory. This decentralized procedure necessarily resulted in chaotic and incomplete accounts, for which Tseng was forced to apologize in reporting to the Court.\(^{54}\) More inconvenient from Tseng's point of view, however, was that his various financial deputies, lacking any real local authority, were "all in miserable circumstances."\(^{55}\) There was as yet no responsible supervisory personnel nor any systematic procedure, to direct this dispersed organization.\(^{56}\) But this last deficiency Tseng was most able to remedy.

In March 1857, less than two months after his commissariat organization was taken over by the Kiangsi provincial administration, Tseng went into retirement in mourning for the death of his father, from which he was not to emerge again for more than a year. Although it seems unlikely that it could have been so intended, the progressive decentralization of his organization up to this time must have facilitated his departure from the scene—an organization requiring his personal direction no longer existed. It is not clear how his organization would have developed had there been no such interruption in his activities. But this hiatus had important consequences: it allowed Tseng to make a fresh start when he re-emerged in 1858 with new plans for reorganization. Therefore, this period of his temporary retirement was an important organizational transition between the first and second periods of his financial operations.

\(^{52}\) At this time Li Han-chang temporarily retired in mourning to his home in Anhwei, and became involved in militia activities there. TWCKCC, "Tsou-kao," 291.

\(^{53}\) *Ibid.*, 282–283. The seven detachments were those of T'a-ch'i-pu, Lo Tse-nan, Yang Tsai-fu, P'eng Yü-lin, Li Meng-ch'üin, Li Yuan-tu, and Chou Feng-shan, The new units were led by Li Hsü-pin, Chiang I-feng, Tseng Kuo-hua, and Tseng Kuo-ch'üan.


Reorganization, 1858–1860

Even before his resumption of active leadership upon emerging from retirement in July 1858, Tseng had set in motion his plans for reorganization in January of that year. It was from this time, therefore, that a new stage in his financial operations began.

The expedient decentralization which had characterized the initial period of his operations had been dictated by the nature of his revenue sources. He had sought to tap provincial resources and local contributions from a number of separate provinces, and his personnel for this purpose had been placed accordingly. By this time (1857–1858), these sources were diminishing or proving inadequate, and new and more systematic sources were sought. Throughout this second period, likin was on the rise as a potential resource, while soliciting contributions, the other principal reliance, was waning. The significance of this next stage, therefore, lies in its transitional position in the development of revenue sources, and in the appropriate adjustments which were made in Tseng’s financial structure.

Tseng’s first step in reorganization was a retrospective clarification and rationalization of the previous operations of various units under his direction, which he divided into several principal divisions, demarcating the sequence of their activities. His preliminary report was intended as a step toward a unification of the operations through the elimination of confusion and discrepancies in the financial accounting of these activities. Henceforth Tseng would submit general collective accounts rather than fragmented accounts of specific divisions.

As soon as military operations in Kiangsi were concluded, Tseng intended to establish a new office managed by his six financial deputies who at the moment were dispersed among four provinces. Under Tseng’s central direction these deputies would follow unified accounting procedures. Accordingly, upon resuming his campaign in Kiangsi in the summer of 1858, he set up a general office (tsung-chü) at Hu-k‘ou, Kiangsi, to manage financial affairs. Tseng appointed Li Han-chang to head this new “Accounting Office” (pao-hsiao chü): Li had been with Tseng longer than almost any other one of his deputies and had consistently served him as a financial officer until his own temporary retirement just before Tseng’s in early 1857.

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57 Ibid., 282–283. 21 January 1858.
58 Ibid., 283.
59 These six deputies—T‘ao Shou-yü, Li Han-chang, Yu Lin, Wan Yün-kuan, Hu Ta-jen, and Kan Chin—were those who had already entered his service at various times through the first period of his activities (see above). The seventh man, Cheng Te-chi, had died in the meantime. Ibid.
60 Ibid., 291. 18 September 1858. See also TWCKCC, “Nien-p‘u,” 62.
61 Tseng, Diary, 472; TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 291. See n. 55 above.
Several considerations would suggest that the Accounting Office did more than merely render financial accounts of Tseng’s operations to the Court. First, the office was located with the headquarters of the marine forces which also handled transportation and supply for Tseng. Second, it was associated with a “Supply Office” (chuan-yüan chii) also located at Hu-k’ou and which shared its staff. Finally, its leading personnel (especially Li Han-chang, who was one of Tseng’s most important followers) were all those who had earlier handled important and varied financial tasks for Tseng. The Accounting Office should be interpreted as a central office in charge of general financial administration.

For some undetermined reason, the Accounting Office was reestablished at Wu-ch’eng, south of Hu-k’ou on the west shore of Poyang lake, less than one year later. Apart from the Supply Office located at Hu-k’ou, there were at least two other Supply Offices in Hupeh and Kiangsi, to provide logistical support to Tseng’s forces. Besides these offices Tseng also established a “Disbursement Office” (chih-yung chii), apparently located at Nan-ch’ang, the Kiangsi provincial capital. The function of this latter office is unclear; but in view of the fact that Tseng was coming to rely increasingly on Kiangsi for financial support it would seem likely that the Disbursement Office served as a fiscal liaison with the Kiangsi provincial administration, to funnel whatever funds were forthcoming from that source to either the Accounting Office or Tseng directly. Moreover, recalling that before his retirement in 1857 Tseng’s commissariat organization had been taken over by the Kiangsi administration, we may suggest that the earlier connection was preserved in this new office.

Taken together, these developments signified a systematization and centralization of operations under Tseng’s authority. Henceforth he seems to have had greater central control over the financial support of the various military detachments under his direction, even when the actual detachment under his immediate command was only a small part of those total forces. It was this system of comprehensive supraprovincial control over provincially organized agencies of procurement, coupled with growing fiscal autonomy, that permitted Tseng to circumvent his weak official position with respect to the provincial administrations. He thus was developing essentially private means—an autonomous personal organization and autonomous financial support—to accomplish the ends which his formal official position could not. Simply stated, Tseng’s private authority compensated for his inadequate official authority. As suggested above, this was only a partial solution. He still lacked complete command of

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62 Lo Erh-kang, 163; see also Chao Lieh-wen, 689–690.
63 Tseng, Diary, 472.
65 Tseng, Diary, 710. 15 August 1859. Cf. TWCKCC, “Nien-p’u,” 69. It is not known precisely when this move was made.
66 Tseng, Diary, 473.
revenue sources themselves, notably likin. But his reorganization and centralization of 1858 laid the foundations for the subsequent stage of his operations.

**Governor-General, 1860–1864**

In the summer of 1860 Tseng’s long struggle was finally rewarded when he was appointed to a substantive position of provincial authority. Tseng’s new position and powers were defined and expanded in successive edicts over a two-month period from June to August 1860. The upshot of these appointments was that he was made concurrently a President of the Board of War, Governor-General of Liang-Kiang (Kiangnan, which included Kiangsu and Anhwei, plus Kiangsi) with exclusive military and territorial authority, and Imperial Commissioner for military operations in Kiangnan. This new position of authority marked the fruition of Tseng’s previous efforts, largely outside of the official structure, to mobilize resources and create an apparatus with which to employ them. The appointment was the immediate consequence of the destruction of the government forces besieging the Taiping capital at Nanking in the spring of 1860. But beyond that, over the years Tseng had made his own armies and organization indispensable to the Court. In 1860 it had no choice but to bring him in from the cold at last.

Indeed, it seems that a position of controlling authority in the suppression campaign had been earnestly sought and planned for by Tseng and his supporters. Even before the news of the disastrous defeat at Nanking reached him, Tseng had been meeting at Su-sung in southern Anhwei with his principal advisors and military commanders for lengthy discussions of the strategic situation. Upon receiving this news they immediately devoted their attention to plans to save the situation. In this respect, the sureness and rapidity with which Tseng proposed new organizational measures after receiving his official appointments a short time later is noteworthy. But Tseng would not have become so indispensable had he not already built up a durable and effective apparatus in his service over the previous years. Now Tseng had accomplished the effective combination of a supraprovincial organization, of his own creation and under his personal direction, with a powerful official position of provincial and central authority which was to be essential for the suppression of the rebellion.

The unusual position of power that Tseng Kuo-fan came to occupy after 1860 has been noted by a number of persons, some with consider-

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67 TWCKCC, “Nien-p’u” 73–76.
68 Lo Erh-kang, 72.
70 Tseng, Diary, 863–873.
71 Ibid., 867; Wang Erh-min, Huai-chūn chih, 16.
able rapture. To the extent that it points up the magnitude of his accomplishment, his own view of the extraordinary character of his position is worth a passing comment. Tseng was certainly not unappreciative of his extraordinary position. When he heard of his first appointment, as Acting Governor-General of Liang-Kiang and President of the Board of War, he and his colleagues enthusiastically and rather immodestly speculated on the increased longevity which might be expected for the dynasty. Later, when he received the announcement of his appointment as Imperial Commissioner, and the regularization of his governor-generalship, he was more subdued by the prospect: "The position of authority is too high and the designation is too exalted; I really tremble at the thought of the outcome." By nature always wary of the pitfalls of pride, Tseng therefore welcomed the emperor's subsequent admonition against self-will, recalling that his grandfather had likewise admonished him when he had first set out on his official career.

Tseng's new official status placed at his command economic resources which had formerly been beyond his reach. For the first time he was able to exploit the likin revenue, which he proceeded to develop as the most promising source of financial support. Within his territorial jurisdiction only Kiangsi was largely free of war, whereas Kiangsu was just then being invaded for the first time. Accordingly, Kiangsi became the source of financial support for Tseng's armies operating mostly in Anhwei and Kiangsu during this period.

Tseng consequently reformed his financial administration under the management of the financial commissioner of Kiangsi. The financial commissioner's office at Nan-ch'ang henceforth assumed the functions, previously served by the Accounting Office, of a central office of financial administration. Moreover, now that any problem of liaison with a separate provincial administration had ceased to exist, the Disbursement Office at Nan-ch'ang lost its raison d'etre. The result was that the general fiscal functions of these agencies were merged under the financial commissioner, who was specifically charged with this additional responsibility and provided with a staff to assist him. From this time on financial reports were

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72 See Yung Wing, 141–142; Michael, The Taiping Rebellion, 164; Folsom, 66; Miao Ch'üan-ch'i, "Tseng Kuo-fan mu-fu sheng-k'uang . . . ," 367.
73 Ibid., 878.
74 Ibid., 921.
75 Ibid., 934.
77 See ibid., 333, for Tseng's report on his reorganization.
78 Nowhere in his memorials does Tseng refer explicitly to the Accounting Office or the Disbursement Office. Rather, he regularly employs the very generalized term "commissariat" (liang-t'ai) when discussing various parts of his financial administration in his reports. Therefore, he describes the new function of the Kiangsi financial commissioner as "general manager of the commissariat" (tsung-pan liang-t'ai). See Chap. V for a further discussion of this terminological problem.
to be the exclusive duty of the office of the financial commissioner, there- 
by avoiding the confusion which previous multiple reports had entailed.79

Following his arrival at Ch’i-men in southern Anhwei in July 1860, 
Tseng set up a “Disbursement Commissariat” (chih-ying liang-t’ai) loc- 
cated with his field headquarters.80 This new agency would seem to have 
been designed to serve as a fiscal liaison with the new central office at 
Nan-ch’ang, thus having a function similar to that of the former Disburse-
ment Office located there. With the recovery of An-ch’ing and the ad- 
vance on Nanking in 1861, this commissariat organization split into three 
parts: (1) The “Outer River Commissariat” (chiang-wai liang-t’ai) was 
created at An-ch’ing, presumably to support the marine forces. (2) The 
agency at Ch’i-men became the “Inland Commissariat” (shan-nei liang-
t’ai), to support the armies in Anhwei. (3) The commissariat which sup-
ported Tseng Kuo-ch’uan’s army first at An-ch’ing and later at Nanking 
had no special designation, but was based in the headquarters of the 
marine force.81

The most significant innovation involved the new disposition to be 
made of Kiangsi financial resources. The regular provincial land and poll 
taxes and likin duties were to be separately arranged. The regular pro-
vincial tax revenue was to go to the governor, to support the provincial 
military forces of Kiangsi (lii-ying and special defense forces). The likin 
revenue of the province was to go to Tseng, to support his military forces 
operating outside the province.82 Likin was administered by a separate 
office, managed by special deputies, over which the provincial adminis-
tration had no control. Tseng appointed Li Han-chang and Li Huan to 
administer the Kiangsi likin.83

In spite of his powerful new position, an insufficiency of funds never 
ceased to plague Tseng’s operations.84 There was a notable difference, 
however, between this period and his earlier periods of activity. Now the 
difficulties which he had to contend with were no longer primarily insti-
tutional in origin, presented by the immobile fiscal system or his lack of 
oficial status. Instead they were mainly imposed by the physical limita-
tions of the existing resources themselves.85

In this mature period of his financial operations after 1860, one is pre-

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79 Ibid., 333, 334.
80 Ibid., 801.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 333.
83 Ibid., 337. On Li Huan, see Hummel, 458.
84 See for instance, TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 358–359 and 365–366. Pong speci-
fically discusses this problem in some detail in “The Income and Military Ex-
penditure of Kiangsi Province in the Last Years (1860–1864) of the Taiping Re-
bellion.” The intricate financial arrangements and policies, particularly the land tax 
reforms, in the areas under Tseng’s control, merit a systematic study in themselves. 
The topic is a large one which might well repay further examination, but must 
remain beyond the scope of the present study.
85 Cf. Pong, 62.
presented with the clearest view of what might best be described as the ambivalent orientation of Tseng’s organization. On one hand, the administrative boundaries within his organization conformed to provincial lines, and consequently there was the characteristic provincial orientation which we have observed in his administrative practice from the first period of his operations. On the other hand, these administrative divisions were linked together in a network to serve ultimately supraprovincial objectives, an orientation which emerged clearly in the second period of Tseng’s operations.

In relation to this supraprovincial orientation, the particular choice of Kiangsi as the economic base of operations (and an administrative base as well, therefore) was merely expedient—had the military situation been different it could have been Kiangsu, which was a more wealthy province. In fact, Tseng suggested that while Kiangsi should provide financial support, Hunan and Hupeh should become the source for recruitment, a functional arrangement which obviously transcended narrow provincial interests. Similarly, when he was appointed governor-general, one of Tseng’s immediate expectations was the interdependence of Anhwei and Kiangsi in recruitment and fund-raising. Tseng’s disposition of the Kiangsi revenue also suggests a supraprovincial orientation. In effect, he simply surrendered the conventional revenues to provincial uses, but retained for his own supraprovincial purposes the revenue (likin) that was least accountable to the provincial or central governments. Indeed, Tseng’s comprehensive financial reports which he submitted to the Court (after 1860) contain no recognition of provincial divisions.

The ends which Tseng’s private operations served were supraprovincial. So far as possible he oriented his means to those ends. His means were nevertheless inescapably limited by the provincial matrix. To a great extent Tseng was able to allocate men and money on a supraprovincial scale, but he still had to collect them on a provincial scale. Tseng’s autonomous organization represented greatly expanded private means to accomplish public ends, but the means were conditioned by their institutional framework.

An aspect of Tseng’s supraprovincial autonomy which should not be overlooked is the continuity of personnel in his organization. Li Hanchang is only the most salient example of financial specialists who continued to serve Tseng through the progressive administrative ramifications of his organization. Tseng himself admitted that the number of such personnel was very small, totalling no more than forty all together. This

86 TWCKCC, “Tsou-kao,” 333.
87 Tseng, Diary, 879.
89 For example, some of these limitations are spelled out in Kuhn, 160–164.
91 Ibid., 801.
fact may be taken to indicate the cohesiveness of his organization.

In an enthusiastic encomium, Jung Hung (Yung Wing), who served under Tseng, said of him:

Tsang Kwoh Fan was made the generalissimo of the imperialists. To enable him to cope successfully with the Taipings, Tsang was invested with almost regal power. The revenue of seven or eight provinces was laid at his feet for disposal, also the official ranks and territorial appointments were at his command. So Tsang Kwoh Fan was literally and practically the supreme power of China at that time. But true to his innate greatness, he was never known to abuse the almost unlimited power that was placed in his hands, nor did he take advantage of the vast resources that were at his disposal to enrich himself or his family, relatives or friends.⁹²

In view of the limitations and difficulties Tseng encountered, this appraisal seems almost pathetically off the mark—even the suggestion that he might have been able to enrich himself had he chosen to is ironic in light of his struggle to acquire funds. But if Tseng's financial power was not really as impressive as it seemed to Jung Hung at the time, nevertheless his position may have been impressive in another way which Jung Hung hardly appreciated. The resources Tseng was able to command remained limited, but the organization which he devised to circumvent the financial and political problems confronting him was impressive.

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⁹² Yung Wing, 141–142.
VII
Specialists and Generalists

In the Introduction it was suggested that while Tseng Kuo-fan had no intention of initiating fundamental institutional change, his practical efforts to defend the old order contributed to its transformation. What were the implications of his activities? What were their limitations? What were their consequences for China's modernization? These questions hinge on: (1) the problem of Tseng's autonomy, and (2) the development of autonomous private means to accomplish public ends as a mode of bureaucratic change.

Tseng acquired either partial or complete autonomy of operation in: (1) the recruitment, employment, promotion, and advancement of personnel; (2) fiscal control and financial development; (3) military power; and (4) ideological emphasis. Of these areas, only the last had remained in the Ming-Ch'ing period as the partial responsibility of the literati who were the guardians of the Confucian tradition. For the rest, this autonomous development, as a breach of the traditional state monopoly in these areas, had vital political implications as a sign of dynastic decline. But the phenomenon of Tseng's autonomous activities is not to be dismissed as merely a reflection of the traditional dynastic cycle syndrome.

Tseng was an ambiguous figure in the process of China's transformation in the nineteenth century. Although he saved the dynasty from the Taipings, it is significant that the gratitude of the Manchus was limited:

This failure to comply with an imperial promise [to make the suppressor of the rebellion a "Wang" or Prince] saddened Tseng Kuo-fan to the end of his days. The shadow of the last Chinese Prince, Wu San-kuei, still lingered over the Forbidden City.

Even for an official of such proven and consummate loyalty as Tseng, the suspicion of the monarchy could not be quieted. Between Wu San-kuei, who had helped the Manchus establish their dynasty, and Tseng Kuo-fan, who helped them hold on to it, there is a suggestive parallel. Both men were Chinese who aided the conquerors against their Chinese enemies. But Wu San-kuei had later attempted to carve out his own dynasty in the south and there was always the chance that Tseng might do the same, to which persistent rumors attested. Indeed, as it was,

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1 Michael, "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," xxxi.
2 W. L. Bales, *Tso Tsung-t'ang, Soldier and Statesman of Old China* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1937), 188.
Tseng’s autonomy had already progressed so far that his organization could be regarded as a viable foundation for a new Chinese dynasty, controlling the richest area of the empire and wielding authority in all of the crucial areas of personnel, finance, and military power.4

Although Tseng remained loyal to the Manchu monarchy, he was responsible for initiating a process of regionalizing authority which contributed to the eventual fall of the Ch‘ing.6 But regionalism was equally anathema to the monarchy. Thus in appointing Tseng governor-general in 1860, the central government may have hoped to nip in the bud any development toward an independent regional organization, calculating that Tseng would readily take up a purely provincial role.6 To formalize and define Tseng’s position would also serve to hem it in bureaucratically. It is noteworthy that there was no regional leader after Tseng who lacked some form of official provincial position which defined, and therefore limited, his authority. The government’s expectation of confining Tseng’s power was justified to a limited extent—he reformed his financial organization according to his provincial bases, for example. Although, as we have seen, this change was in part a merely formal one still Tseng’s new official authority was essential to the effective development of his position and had been eagerly received by him. Regional leaders were not entirely private individuals, and when they lacked official status their position of authority was correspondingly impaired.7

Neither regional secession nor dynastic succession is adequate to explain Tseng Kuo-fan’s activities. Chinese history has sometimes been set in a framework of an alternating process of bureaucratization and feudalization. Although feudalization of power was a typical response to crisis and political disintegration in earlier periods of Chinese history, Tseng’s activities were set in a context of progressive bureaucratization and centralization through the Ming-Ch‘ing era which made that period quite different from the previous ones. In their private or personal nature Tseng’s activities may have possessed a feudal potential. But the character of his operations and organization indicates a process not of feudalization, but of autonomous bureaucratization.8

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6 No doubt the monarchy was motivated in this decision by the necessity of self-preservation; its armies had been destroyed and Tseng possessed the only viable replacements. See Michael, “Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China,” xi; and Lo Ehr-kang, 72. But it must also have been sharply aware of the political ramifications and advantages of such a policy.
7 The career of as powerful a figure as Li Hung-chang is a good case in point. Folsom asserts that “Li Hung-chang was not a dictator, but just another governor-general . . .” (!) Folsom, 186.
8 As ideal types and tools of political analysis, “bureaucracy” and “feudalism” are distinct and often antithetical concepts, especially as understood and developed
How well does Tseng's organization conform in practice to the characteristics of the ideal type of bureaucracy developed by Max Weber and others?9 The essential characteristics of bureaucracy can be said to include: (1) specialization and diversification of function and jurisdiction; (2) hierarchical structure of authority and responsibility; (3) administration based on stable, objective rules and on written documents, creating an impersonality of operation; (4) recruitment and management based on ability and on technical or special knowledge; (5) differentiation of office from its incumbent (and public from private income), together with the continuity of the former.10

It is clear from the foregoing description of Tseng's organization that its structure and operation satisfy in varying degrees the terms of all five of these categories. His organization possessed functionally diversified segments, hierarchical structure, administration based on written documents, recruitment and management on the basis of ability and special knowledge, and a separation of office and incumbent. It must be cautioned that the requirements of these ideal characteristics were not fully satisfied by Tseng's organization in all cases—some points of correspondence are closer than others. Commentators on the phenomenon are careful to point out that these characteristics of bureaucracy are meant to describe an ideal type, as a conceptual and analytical tool, not an absolute and exclusive rule.11 An absolute equation is not being made here. With this warning in mind, we may suggest that the correspondence between the characteristics of Tseng's "bureaucracy" and the ideal type of bureaucracy is generally close.

There was a significant admixture of patrimonial and other non-bureau-

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10 Different orderings and arrangements of the basic characteristics of bureaucracy do exist, but there seems to be a general agreement on the fundamentals. The present arrangement most closely follows Mouzelis, 38-39. See also Weber, Essays, 196-204; Bendix, 424; and Eisenstadt, "Political Struggle . . .," 18. Of these, the last differs from the rest in being a separate treatment of the subject rather than an explanation of the Weberian system itself. Nevertheless, it is fundamentally similar to Weber's.

11 Mouzelis, 43-44; Bendix, 296.
ocratic elements in Tseng's entire bureaucratic apparatus, including his mu-fu. But this was particularly the case in the mu-fu, where personal and informal relationships were more prevalent. On the other hand, a more thorough development of typically bureaucratic traits prevailed in the various extra-mu-fu segments of the organization. It is especially this contrast that makes the distinction between two fundamental organizational levels in Tseng's operations appropriate. The "offices" (chü) and "departments" (so) of Tseng's apparatus had well-defined jurisdiction and separate functions, whereas the mu-fu had a more indefinite form and included diffuse functions. The "deputies" (wei-yuan) who staffed the offices were semi-official functionaries having relatively well-defined status and responsibilities, whereas members of the mu-fu (particularly in its higher levels) were often persons having more personal relationships with their leader and colleagues, as well as diffuse responsibilities. Finally, the "offices" had a semi-official status and a tenuous relationship with the government, whereas the mu-fu had neither.

The mu-fu possessed an inherent bureaucratic potential in such specifically bureaucratic characteristics as functional division, specialization, and an emphasis on ability, experience, and knowledge. In the prototypical mu-fu these elements remained implicit or coexisted with other, non-bureaucratic elements. In the bureaucratic organization which grew out of it, the bureaucratic elements became explicit and dominant. These characteristics, notably the emphasis on specialization and knowledge, imparted to Tseng's entire apparatus a "rational" orientation which should be considered an important impetus to the emergence of bureaucratic organization.

Apparently, Tseng's organization developed according to the premises of a bureaucratic pattern. This process approximates the type of change within a bureaucratic polity which Eisenstadt has called "accommodable change":

[Accommodable change] consisted of changes which could, to a large extent, be accommodated within the basic premises and insti-

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12 By the definition of the term, chü includes the essential features of a division, mutually exclusive of other divisions, and possessing a singular or special function. Tz'u-yuan 480; Tz'u-hai I, 660.
13 See Chap. II for a discussion of the mu-fu institution.
14 Yang suggests that the existence of nonbureaucratic factors, especially personal relationships, in a bureaucratic framework served certain functions which made them not entirely incommensurate with that framework. Yang, 157.
15 "Rational" may be taken here in the sense that Weber employs the term, to connote "objective," "impersonal," "calculable." While possibly rather hazardous, this identification is explicitly made by Weber: "Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge. This is the feature of it which makes it specifically rational." Merton, 26. "Bureaucracy has a 'rational' character: rules, means, ends, and matter-of-factness dominates its bearing." Weber, Essays, 244.
tutions of the political system of any given historical bureaucratic society. This type constituted, mostly, changes in the definition of diverse concrete roles in the political institutions, in the structure of various groups participating in them, and, to some extent, of some concrete norms and arrangements of the political institutions. This type did not extend to the basic norms, symbols, and levels of activity of the central political institution.\(^{16}\)

In Tseng Kuo-fan’s case, this process took the form of an autonomous development largely through the failure of the monarchy to respond effectively to crises in several areas of activity related initially to the Taiping Rebellion. Most importantly, this autonomy developed through Tseng’s acquisition of authority in concrete means of administration: control of personnel and finances. Traditionally these were the crucial limitations to the displacement of authority from its legitimate centers.\(^{17}\) The monarchy surrendered a measure of authority for the sake of limiting the development of independent regional power. But with the new scope of autonomy acquired by Tseng, the central government lost its traditional control through the monopoly of administrative means. Thus lielin revenue circumvented the government control of the collection and allocation of revenue when that failed. The Hsiang Army (and others like it) bypassed government control over the military when that also failed. Finally, the administrative structure created for both of these functions offered an alternative area for service. On top of this, the coming of the West lent a new context to the traditional political struggle that greatly complicated the calculation of alternatives within the polity.\(^{18}\)

The growth of Tseng Kuo-fan’s private bureaucracy represented a typical mode of political activity in China: autonomous private means to accomplish public ends. It was also a mode of development—an orientation toward distinct goals, and the creation of special organizations for the mobilization of support for those goals—which was characteristically bureaucratic.\(^{19}\) Because it occurred within a bureaucratic context, this process reflected a tendency toward autonomous bureaucratization within a bureaucratic system rather than one towards feudalization or regional decentralization.\(^{20}\) To the degree that such a process was commensurate

\(^{16}\) Eisenstadt, Political Systems, 313. Eisenstadt specifically applies the concept of accommodable change to describe political development and change within the traditional bureaucratic polity of China. Ibid., 323–331.

\(^{17}\) Cf. Mouzelis, 22–23; Eisenstadt, “Political Struggle . . . .,” 22; Eisenstadt, Political Systems, 275.


\(^{19}\) Eisenstadt, “Political Struggle . . . .” 16–17.

\(^{20}\) In this respect, Eisenstadt maintains that tendencies toward feudalization and patrimonial decentralization “never developed beyond the embryonic stage in China,” especially after the T’ang. Eisenstadt, Political Systems, 325. He views this fact as owing mainly to the crucial position of the literati in Chinese society. Ibid., 330–331.
with the traditional polity, much of its radical content was mitigated. But in the process of modernization, innovations could be (and were) introduced through the agency of the greatly expanded private means which developed in response to problems of internal disintegration and external aggression. Thus the development of private means such as Tseng Kuo-fan's bureaucracy provided a fertile field for the emergence of new forms and emphases, particularly the value of specialization.

THE TRADITIONAL PREEMINENCE OF THE GENERALIST

One ingredient of the cultural transformation of China in the nineteenth century was the transvaluation of the traditional ideal of bureaucratic omnificence under Western pressures and accompanying demands for a new professional specialization.21 But ideological and cultural quandaries began with institutional problems. Institutional developments in response to concrete problems of China's modernization in turn made their own demands. One might ask how the depreciation of the tradition of the amateur in office, the generalist, was matched by a corresponding appreciation of the role of the professional, the specialist. One conclusion of this study is that in nineteenth century China ideological implications rose from institutional problems.22

In their role as coordinators and supervisors, Confucian scholar-officials presided over the various administrative divisions of the Chinese imperial bureaucratic system as generalists. To explain this dominant position of the generalist in the Chinese bureaucratic tradition it has been suggested that the generalist was best suited to guide administration based on the diffuse goals and diverse functions that characterized the tradition, especially in which social relations were particularly emphasized.23 In light of the fairly specific administrative pressures, centering on the performance of law and taxation functions, by the government on its officials, it is questionable whether this explanation is entirely valid.24 Nevertheless it is true that officials often had to perform a great variety of tasks, including those of social arbitration, which demanded a diffuse sort of general competence, rather than any specific technical knowledge:

The social system did not permit its elite to narrow their personalities by specialization. To know the classics by heart and have a

23 Balazs, 9, 16–17; Yang, 137–139.
24 See John Watt's articles and his dissertation for discussions of the bureaucratic pressures on officials.
smattering of music, to master the rules of polite behavior and acquire a polished literary style, to be something of a calligrapher and an occasional writer of verse—these were the kinds of accomplishment considered most likely to contribute more to the exercise of social and political functions than would training in some profession or study of the exact sciences.25

The generalist in office was neither a specialist nor a professional. But even if we grant the validity of this explanation for the generalist's function, another question remains: what was the utility of an education almost exclusively grounded in the body of orthodox thought and literature? The facile traditional view that the stylized humanistic preparation of officials trained them in the essential points of human nature, and in the preservation of the moral order which was the foundation of stable society, seems clearly to be a rationalization after the fact.26 Actually, the cultural tradition of the generalist was the road to social status and the source of political legitimation, mainly through the examination system and largely independent of its specific content. It was not so much itself a guide to correct and effective action as it was a conventional qualification for admission to political and social leadership. Therefore, while we need not deny the utility of the humanistic preparation of the generalist for some facets of an official career, it is probably best to interpret the generalist's tradition as having a predominantly symbolic, not a functional, significance.27

In fact, promotion of knowledge by the examination system was critically important (the most important factor) in determining the nature of that knowledge—but that knowledge was increasingly removed from any practical administrative application. It was primarily for this reason (as noted in Chapter II) that officials found it necessary to retain specialists, as mu-fu secretaries, to carry the administrative burdens of their offices.28 Since generalists were dependent on specialists, they preserved—in defense or compensation—the view of specialists as not only subordinate to them (which in fact they were) but also socially and culturally inferior. Conversely, anyone contemplating a career as a specialist was bound to view it as at best a secondary choice—because the potential specialist was also indoctrinated with the generalist's values.29 Secretaries, nevertheless, were often aspiring officials themselves, sharing the same assumptions as the officials who employed them—hence the peculiar ambivalence in the mu-fu between the values of friendship, implying equality, and technical proficiency, implying subordination.

As long as the rationalization was preserved that the moral order—

25 Balazs, 9. For another description of the generalist ideal, see Levenson, 21–22.
26 See Yang, 141, for an instance of this view.
28 Cf. Yang, 142; and Ch'üi, 95.
and not practical administrative competence—was the mainspring of the Chinese polity and society, the traditional preeminence of the generalist who was the ideal representative of the moral order, was maintained. As long as the state held the monopoly in the employment of administrative personnel, and as long as the most acceptable type of knowledge was that of the Confucian generalist, the specialist remained a mere functional extension of the generalist insofar as he had any place at all in this system. The principal obstacle to the development of specialization, then, lay in the absence of any arena for its expanded employment.30

This situation was significantly altered in the course of China's nineteenth-century transformation. Initially, new institutional forms developed as private means to cope with military, financial, and political problems arising from internal disintegration and external challenge. In turn, these new developments opened up new opportunities for the employment of special talents and made new demands on expertise. At the same time, there developed a growing disenchantment with the assumptions of the traditional order. This called into question the traditional value and preeminence of the generalist.31

We have seen (in Chapter II) that the traditional mu-fu system offered two basic alternatives to those who entered its service. It could be a stepping stone to a regular bureaucratic career as a Confucian generalist in office. Or it could become an end in itself, a permanent professional career as an administrative specialist. Given the traditional social and cultural assumptions of the predominant generalist, the second alternative was for a long time clearly less attractive than the first to anyone but eccentrics. But in this second alternative, at least, the mu-fu possessed a latent professionalism. Tseng Kuo-fan's private bureaucracy, which had its origin in the mu-fu system, exploited this implicit potential for specialists and professionals, and provided a basis for their development which had not existed previously. On one hand, his elaborate organization with its special functions offered an alternative career to official service in the regular bureaucracy. On the other hand, the emphasis of this organization on special knowledge and competence—spanning a wide variety of subjects including finance, military affairs, political and social problems, foreign affairs, and technology—encouraged a type of personnel who increasingly were experienced professionals more than they were cultivated scholars.

30 Cf. Yang, 144–145; Ch'ü, 115. John Watt points out (dissertation, 437, n. 60) that Ch'ü's statement that "the experts and the officials remained two distinct groups throughout the dynasty, with no possibility of interchange," is an exaggeration. Indeed, one point of the present thesis is that in the late Ch'ing at least, opportunities did open up for the employment of experts.

31 It is impossible to explore this complex cultural and ideological question in the present study, which is concerned primarily with the institutional side of the problem. Levenson has discussed this question at length, and what must remain an assumption here, therefore, has been inspired by his study.
TSENG KUO-FAN'S SPECIALISTS

We have observed personnel in diverse segments of Tseng Kuo-fan's embryonic mu-fu and his private bureaucracy whose service was characterized in varying degrees by their practical experience, special knowledge, or particular competence and aptitude.

Men who had acquired experience in financial administration served in Tseng's fiscal apparatus, which became the most extensive part, in size and geographical dispersion, of his organization. Generally these same persons served Tseng continuously, throughout the process of the elaboration of the apparatus, as a corps of fiscal agents and managers.

Men who had demonstrated ability in military planning and organization served in Tseng's General Staff, sometimes advancing from there to field commands.

Men who had particular knowledge of foreign affairs served in the mu-fu itself. Because no special foreign office was created by Tseng, the mu-fu served that function. This was only natural since the foreign affairs matters which came to Tseng's attention often involved either confidential affairs of state or secretarial functions which fell within the mu-fu's purview.

Men with technical engineering or scientific competence at first served in the divisions of Tseng's organization concerned with military construction and armaments, such as the Inner Munitions Department or the Shipyard. Unfortunately, information on Tseng's early arsenals is slight. Later, other divisions devoted to technical education and translation projects grew out of efforts to further such activities. A well known later organization which evolved from these early activities under Tseng's guidance was the Kiangnan Arsenal (Kiangnan chi-ch'i chih-tsao-chü), which employed a number of engineers and other experts.

Even in the relatively amorphous mu-fu, there existed an incipient specialization of functions. We have seen this (in Chapter IV) in the division of military and financial functions between Tseng's two close advisors, Liu Jung and Kuo K'un-tao, for instance. Moreover, the mu-fu evolved as an agency for the training and placement of personnel in the various divisions of Tseng's bureaucracy. For example, Feng Chüan-kuang, who was recruited by Tseng in 1859 to be a correspondence secretary in his mu-fu, later became one of the co-directors of the Kiangnan Arsenal after 1867.

It is impossible to identify many of the specialists and experts who worked for Tseng. Some, of course, were loath to admit to this kind of

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33 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 786; PCCP, 18: 14a–b.
career when it was still so novel, and their sympathetic biographers agreed. Many others, in a period of transition, were not yet wholly committed to the new professionalism.

Chao Lieh-wen, whose case has been studied at length in Chapter IV, was one of the latter. He was an incipient foreign affairs expert, yet he was also a respectable classical scholar of the traditional sort. But his enthusiasm for the new knowledge is obvious, and one begins to suspect that, for Chao, the old knowledge was losing its grip. Was Chao indeed more interested in his new competency than in questions of Confucian ideology and tradition? Though of course one cannot be certain, it seems so. His diary is replete with recorded information and opinion on foreigners and foreign affairs involving China. In this respect it is revealing to find that Chao's traditionalistic biography entirely passes over any specific mention of this phase of his life. This is probably the best testimony to the unorthodox character of his interest at that time, as well as convincing evidence of the difficulty of tracking down such activity. Was Chao's fascination with foreign affairs related in turn to his apparently genuine disinterest in a regular official position? Again, one cannot make this connection with certainty. But a traditional bureaucratic career might well lose its attractions for one whose consuming interest, lying in another area, could not be served by such a career, and for whom there was now a satisfactory alternative in semi-private service largely devoted to just this interest.

Specialists of a different order, in some ways much less commensurate with the traditional standards of accomplishment, are represented by the scientists and engineers in Tseng's organization. Tseng required engineers for the new technical enterprises he promoted to equip and modernize his military forces, at first chiefly through the agency of the Inner Munitions Department. These were specialists par excellence, experts in the most modern sense—which Chao Lieh-wen (with a tinge of the quasi-traditional "barbarian management" in his specialty and his continued attachment to the generalist's culture) was not.

Li Shan-Ian was one of the most distinguished of these scientists. He was a brilliant mathematician whose aptitude really had no satisfactory place in the orthodox intellectual and social world. For a number of years Li was employed by well-known missionaries in Shanghai in the translation of western scientific texts. After 1862, he served in Tseng's mu-fu for

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35 See PCCP, 26:1a–3a.
37 Gideon Chen devotes an appendix to "some of Tseng's engineers." Chen confirms the difficulty of studying such men. His discussion is limited mainly to the engineers mentioned below, but he includes much interesting detail on the careers of these few.
38 Li Shan-Ian was a native of Hai-ning, Chekiang. PCCP, 43:3b; Hummel, 479.
several years before entering the T’ung-wen-kuan as head of the department of mathematics and astronomy.39 The T’ung-wen-kuan, of course, was itself a response to the sort of needs which prompted Tseng and Li Hung-chang to promote comparable institutions of their own, the latter upon the recommendation of Chao Lieh-wen.40 Hua Heng-fang was an engineer and scientists who entered Tseng’s service in 1862 and later was employed in the Kiangnan Arsenal.41 In addition to participating in the design and construction of steamships, he engaged in translation of western scientific texts for the translation department of the arsenal.42 Hsü Shou, a friend of Hua Heng-fang, was another scientist in Tseng’s service at the same time.43 Hsü, whose interests spanned mathematics, astronomy, and engineering, was likewise later employed as an engineer and translator in the Kiangnan Arsenal.44 Because he is reported to have abjured the traditional course of study for the reason that it lacked practical utility, Hsü Shou especially is symbolic of the transvaluation of the generalist’s tradition and the reorientation toward new careers at this time.45

What these men have in common, besides their scientific interests, is an evident disinclination for the classical tradition of learning, and for traditional social achievement through the examination system. They all failed to achieve (or refused to attempt) official rank and status, until their subsequent extraordinary careers as specialists earned that status for them through recommendation. Moreover, through their translation activities and in other ways, they all contributed significantly to China’s modernization.46 They all had been members of Tseng Kuo-fan’s organization.

Although the span of time is inconceivable, from Chao Lieh-wen, who entered Tseng’s mu-fu in 1861, to Jung Hung (Yung Wing), who entered Tseng’s service in 1863, one can view the evolution which was taking place. From the very beginning, Jung Hung’s career was geographically and culturally detached from traditional Chinese roots.47 He first received foreign missionary schooling in Macao and Hongkong, and continued his education in the United States, graduating from Yale in 1854. Returning to China, he led a checkered career until his friendship with Li Shan-lan

39 PCCP, 43:4a; Hummel, 479–480.
40 See Chap. IV on Chao’s recommendation to Li Hung-chang. For a discussion of the T’ung-wen-kuan, see Wright, 241–248.
41 Hua Heng-fang was a native of Wu-hsi, Kiangsu. PCCP, 43:18b; Yü Yü-ti, 36.
42 PCCP, 43:196; Hummel, 540.
43 Hsü Shou, a native of Wu-hsi, Kiangsu, entered Tseng’s service in company with Hua Heng-fang in 1862. PCCP, 43:12b–13a.
44 PCCP, 43:12b–13a, 15b; Hummel, 540.
45 See PCCP, 43:12b.
46 See Gideon Chen, Appendix, for some of these contributions.
47 Jung Hung was a native of Hsiang-shan, Kwangtung. Hummel, 402. See his autobiography, Yung Wing, My Life in China and America.
brought him to the attention of Tseng Kuo-fan in 1863. Having entered Tseng's mu-fu, he was commissioned by Tseng to return to the United States to purchase machinery for the future Kiangnan Arsenal. As a consequence of this service with Tseng he received official rank. Later, as an outgrowth of his own proposal, he conducted the first Chinese educational mission to the United States in 1872.48

Unlike Chao Lieh-wen, there was no question for Jung Hung of where the primary attraction lay. Clearly, his modern (and largely Western) commitment owed very little if anything to the failing tradition of the generalist and the old learning. Thus we may take Jung Hung to mark a point of departure toward a new kind of career with a modern content. However, it was not merely individual commitment that was the principal impetus for the emergence of these new careers for men like Jung Hung. Jung Hung had already by dint of his own efforts engaged in an unorthodox "career"; but it was Tseng's private bureaucracy, not the government's, which offered a place for such experience and made of this start a real career in China. This was equally true for the other men discussed above, who found employment first in Tseng's organization and then only later with the government.

Without the expanded opportunities provided by organizations like Tseng Kuo-fan's, related to the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion and China's modernization in the nineteenth century, the careers of budding specialists and others with new and unorthodox interests would have been either greatly discouraged or altogether aborted. In addition to this kind of opportunity for careers of a new order, there was also an active new emphasis on the value of specialization. We may detect in the institutional background of the mu-fu system, in the form in which it emerged by the Ch'ing, a latent professionalism and a potential for specialization; but it was the degree of emphasis that was new. This modern emphasis was given concrete formulation in Tseng's private bureaucracy.

In his instructions to the special functionaries (wei-yuan) in his organization, Tseng explicitly stressed the need for practical specialization in their work.49 He suggested that the complexities of modern conditions could be reduced to four essential categories: "military affairs" (chün-shih), "civil affairs" (li-shih), "finance" (hsiang-shih), and "communications" (wen-shih). Each person should become thoroughly versed in one of these areas. Thus military specialization involved attention to battle, defense, topography, and intelligence; civil specialization involved attention to public welfare, pressing for payment of taxes, hearing lawsuits, and encouragement of agriculture; financial specialization involved attention to statutory taxes, likin and contributions, and the promotion of efficiency and economy; communications specialization involved atten-

48 Hummel, 403–404.
49 TWCKCC, "Tsa-chu," 78. No date is given for these instructions.
tion to memorials and reports, instructions, public documents, and letters. Tseng's pragmatic emphasis is quite clear in his explanation of the method of study required by these prescriptions. Attention to (chiang-chiu) each subject involved both "study" (hsueh) and "inquiry" (wen). On one hand, study of the past proceeds through wide reading; study of the present proceeds through practical examples. On the other hand, inquiry through participation (doing) results in correct judgment; inquiry through observation (detachment) results in verification. Diligent practice in this way leads to a broad and effortless ability.

Tseng's instructions to his personnel come down heavily on the side of experiential knowledge and practical specialization, rather than on the side of the orthodox literary tradition and the moral order which was supposed to be the resource of the generalist in office. The pragmatic orientation exhibited by these prescriptions was not itself new, but it was distinctive. Ethical and technical, ideological and practical orientations coexisted as themes in Chinese institutional history. This was equally true of the mu-fu system as a special case. Although latent expertise and professionalism had always existed, the degree of this pragmatic emphasis depended on the demand for it. From Ming times, in contrast to earlier periods, the dominance of the formalistic bureaucratic examination system allowed little scope for development of the technical orientation. By the Ch'ing, professionalism and expertise were in large part relegated to the private sector of activity represented by the mu-fu system, while preparation for public bureaucratic careers emphasized command of the humanistic literary tradition. The ethical and technical orientations then were increasingly distinct.

Unlike the government bureaucracy, Tseng's organization was an essentially private effort and its personnel were directed not to maintaining the social and political order, but to more specific purposes related to restoring that order. Whatever the utility of the rationale of the generalist for the former objective, the practical orientation of the specialist was more applicable for the latter objective. Moreover, the recipients of Tseng's instructions, unlike the officials of the regular bureaucracy who were constantly rotated in their posts, often acquired considerable tenure in the various departments and offices of Tseng's organization. Tseng had no reason to shift his personnel about, and possibly a strong countervailing interest in maintaining them in the positions in which they had already accrued experience and developed expertise.

The specialists and functionaries (including those bearing the title wei-yuan) serving in Tseng's organization can be collectively regarded as a "new species" of personnel in the late Ch'ing. Not all were experts or specialists of the sort presented above, and not all experts belonged exclu-

50 Specifically, we have seen this to be the case among personnel in Tseng's financial administration. See Chap. VI.
sively to this class. But, although diverse, they were linked by common themes, the foremost of which were their divergence from the generalist’s ethical ideal, and their professional orientation. What distinguished the emphasis on practical experience and competence as new or modern in the nineteenth century was the changed context in which it appeared. First, it was accentuated by the absence of a pragmatic orientation in the symbolic ethical qualifications for an official career in the Ming-Ch’ing period. Second, although problems occasioned by internal disintegration and institutional paralysis—not the coming of the West to China—were the impetus for this pragmatic orientation, the presence of the West did lend to it a new context, and increasingly provided it with a new content as well. Because it was distinct from the traditional rationale of the generalist, the more significant this pragmatic orientation became, the more it challenged the ethical orientation of the generalist. While presiding over his personal apparatus of specialists, Tseng never ceased himself to be a generalist. But as his organization swelled, it ceased to be merely a limited personal staff of advisors and secretaries and became a virtual bureaucracy. As it so developed, it opened up new opportunities for professional careers which had very little to do with the predominant but impractical education of the generalist.51

**Innovation and Modernization**

It is unclear how conscious Tseng Kuo-fan was of the innovations he was promoting. This is worth stressing once again. His context limited his appreciation of his contribution. Chang Chih-tung, the famous advocate of self-strengthening in the late nineteenth century, developed the slogan which served as the rationale for the defense of Chinese culture against the Western incursion: “Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function.”52 Ku Hung-ming (one of Chang’s secretaries and a strong partisan of his), comparing Tseng with Chang Chih-tung as two of the most eminent statesmen of the late nineteenth century, suggested that Tseng emphasized practical administration at the expense of ideology, while Chang’s practical methods were really a means to preserve ideology (and therefore Chang was the greater man.)53 But if it seemed that Chang Chih-tung was, while Tseng Kuo-fan was not, a protector of ideology, the frame of reference for the two was different and the difference is significant: Chang was a protector against an external threat, the revolutionary cultural and political invasion of the West; Tseng was a protector against an internal threat, the revolutionary cultural and political challenge of the Taipings. The two men were really protecting the same thing.

52 For a discussion of this slogan and its implications see Levenson, chap. IV.
53 Ku Hung-ming, Ku Hung-ming ti pi-chi [Ku Hung-ming’s Notes] (Taipei: 1954), 1, 6, 7. The original name of this work was Chang-wen-hsiang mu-fu chi-wen [Memoirs from Chang Chih-tung’s Mu-fu].
For Tseng Kuo-fan (in the 1860’s) the main threat and its attendant problems for China were endogenous—cultural demoralization, political disintegration, and social malaise. The West was merely a complication, not an alternative. By Chang Chih-tung’s time (the 1890’s), the West had come to occupy a paramount place in the understanding of China’s problems. Even if Chang himself did not fully understand the problems, by the late nineteenth century Western learning was becoming an explicit alternative to Chinese culture, and Western presence a challenge to Chinese autonomy, to which Chang’s defensive slogan bore witness.

Chang’s frame of reference facilitated his separation of ideological from practical orientations. In contrast to Tseng, Chang’s later role as protector of the traditional ideology was accentuated by his easy ability to isolate Chinese ends from the Western means for their protection, or Chinese ethical learning from Western technical learning. The point of this question of ideological roles is that the explicit differentiation of ideological from technical orientations (or of Chinese substance from Western function which emerged later on) was not made by Tseng Kuo-fan. It has been said of Tseng’s protégé Li Hung-chang that his “job was to defend China against the encroachments of the West and internal rebellion. In order to do this, he had to work with the tools at hand, and he would not let considerations of moral character outweigh talent and ability.” Such an attitude was impossible for Tseng. The officers of his army, for instance, constituted a morally disciplined group of scholars who applied their art of personal self-cultivation to training and battle alike, with distinguished success. Of course, he may have been interested in the recruitment of both indoctrinated generalists and experienced specialists, but the issue of the compatibility or priority of these types remained unarticulated in Tseng’s mind.

As far as he understood it, Tseng was engaged in a task of restoration, not modernization. Although he did not intend it to be so, the innovations made in the course of restoration led to permanent change and contributed to a process of modernization, slight and imperfect though the results may have been. In fact, that innovations which contributed to institutional transformation were made merely as adjustments within the traditional framework only reinforces our appreciation of the weakness of modernization in nineteenth century China.

Although Tseng Kuo-fan was unable to appreciate the consequences of innovation, the men who emerged under his auspices saw the problems more clearly. The specialists he employed in his organization, though relatively few, directly and consciously promoted China’s institu-

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54 Folsom, 152.
55 Lo Erh-kang, 81; Teng Ssu-yü, 62.
tional and cultural transformation. Where did Tseng’s employment of specialists lead?

Among the men Tseng recruited were many who had the most advanced appreciation of China’s situation in their time. Inevitably the ideas of these men not only contributed to his own views of China’s problems but also inspired his specific measures to deal with these problems. We noted Chao Lieh-wen’s rather advanced views on foreign affairs and self-strengthening during his service in Tseng’s mu-fu in 1862. The spirit of these ideas was echoed by Tseng a few months later, in a form which previewed Chang Chih-tung’s later explicit formula.57 We also saw that it was probably Chao who prompted Li Hung-chang to establish a foreign language and technical school in Shanghai in 1863.

Such intellectual affiliations are difficult to substantiate. More concretely, the engineers and scientists working in Tseng’s early munitions agencies actively promoted the development of more advanced enterprises like the Kiangnan Arsenal.58 Li Shan-lan and others helped to bring Jung Hung into Tseng’s organization to further these goals. Jung Hung in turn recommended to Tseng his pet project of an educational mission abroad.

The process of innovation did not end with these men. As it was eventually realized in 1872 under the sponsorship of Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang, Jung Hung’s educational mission was an important early step in educational modernization. The manufacturing efforts of Tseng’s engineers spawned numerous similar projects throughout China. Other arsenals in almost every province either consciously imitated the original arsenals or were their direct offshoots.59 The translation projects associated with the Kiangnan Arsenal (including Li’s foreign language school which it incorporated in 1867) were the first stage in a substantial introduction of Western learning and Western education into China.60 Translation and the new education were intimately related: initial efforts progressed from language training, through translation of engineering and technical manuals, to more comprehensive education.61

It was no coincidence that the early translation and technical training endeavors, and the incipient industrial enterprises, converged. Projects such as the arsenals represented the principal demand for both trained personnel and Western knowledge. Many of the 120 students who studied abroad under Jung Hung’s mission subsequently took up new careers in

57 Tseng Kuo-fan, Diary, 1324.
58 Wang Erh-min, Ch’ing-chi ping-kung-yeh ti hsing-ch’i, 77–78.
61 Ibid., 17.
China for which their training had prepared them. Although it was a respectable beginning, this mission itself was abortive. It was also inadequate to meet the rising demands for specialists and the introduction of Western knowledge. Personnel sufficiently experienced and trained to work in the new organizations and enterprises were scarce. Such specialists were sought with growing urgency by leaders engaged in promoting self-strengthening. What is significant about this new search for vital personnel is that it sought a new kind of talent. The basis for its recruitment bore little resemblance to the traditional criteria for the selection of talent. Implied in this change was a new attitude toward the training of bureaucratic personnel and toward education generally.

Nevertheless there was a painful lag in the fruition of the innovations originating from Tseng Kuo-fan's time. The industrial and educational reforms represented by the early arsenals and translation schools had hardly advanced by the beginning of the twentieth century. As has been frequently noted, such projects remained institutionally and ideologically isolated according to the terms of Chang Chih-tung's formula for self-strengthening. More importantly, the generalists responsible for employing specialists in their organizations held fast in most cases to the same traditional assumptions they had always held in employing secretaries in the mu-fu from which their organizations grew. Even Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang were unwilling to undertake radical institutional reform.

But if they had been more radical, it would still have made little difference. Their entire class resisted the changes which technical training and educational reform demanded. The crux of the issue lay in the rationale of the generalist—his symbolic ethical education. The appreciation of specialization, and the new attitude toward talent which accompanied it, attacked the foundation of the generalist’s traditional preeminence. Institutional innovations which Tseng Kuo-fan set in motion subverted the ideological and educational monopoly of the generalist.

As a response to institutional change, the emergence of this “new species” of personnel, the specialist, facilitated the process of modernization. To suggest that this development facilitated China’s transformation is

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63 Cheng, 29.
64 Cf. Liu, 81–82, 86–87, 91.
67 Chu, 4, 90–91; Powell, 29, 52–53, 161. Concerning the role of education and ideology as the basis of the scholar-officials' position, see Balazs, 7, 16, 18–19.
not, of course, to claim that the process was itself a facile one. Few, if any, students of modern China have failed to remark on the trauma and difficulty of its emergence, especially in comparison with modern Japan. Indeed, this thesis suggests how awkwardly and ponderously China's responses did evolve out of the pre-existing institutional background and remained affiliated with it. To the extent that China’s transformation proceeded within the context of a bureaucratic polity (a process characterized above as “accommodable change”), then the sources of its modern adaptations lay in its institutional past. Among the most important of these sources was the embryonic professionalism and specialization of the *mu-fu* system, which had been the practical support of the generalist in office.
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Glossary

This glossary includes names of persons and terms relating to Tseng Kuo-fan, his activities, and his organization, cited in the text and footnotes. It excludes place names, personal names, and terms cited only peripherally.

Chang Fei 張芾
H. Hsiao-p'u 翟浦
Chang Fu-fan 張復漢
T. Han-ch'iu 漢秋
Chang Hsi-jung 張錫峋
T. Ching-t'ang 敬堂
Chang Yu-chao 張裕釗
T. Lien-ch'ing 廉卿
Chao Lieh-wen 趙烈文
T. Hui-fu 惠甫
H. Neng-ching 能静
Ch'en Ai 陳艾
T. Hu-ch'en 虎臣
H. Wu-chai 子齋
Ch'en Nai 陳蘭
H. Tso-mei 作梅
Ch'en Shih-chieh 鄭士杰
T. Chün-ch'eng 春丞
Chün-ch'en 春臣
Cheng Te-ch'i 鄭德基
Ch'eng Hsueh-ch'i 程學啓
T. Fang-chung 方中
chia-jen 家人
Chiang I-feng 蔣益澧
chiang-wai liang-t'ai 江外糧台
Chiao-pin-lu k'ang-i 接官廳抗議
ch'ien-sheng 監生
c'hien-ku 錢穀
c'hien-tien 錢店
c'hien-ya 簽押
c'hih-hsien 職衙
c'hih-shih 治世
c'hih-tu 制度
c'hih-ying chiü 支應局
c'hih-ying liang-t'ai 支應糧台
Chin An-ching 金安清
H. Mei-sheng 眉生
ch'in-ping 親兵
Chou Feng-shan 周鳳山
chuan-yun chiü 船運局
ch'uan-ch'ang 船廠
chung 忠
chii 政
chiian-na-fang 捐納房
chüan-sheng 捐生
chiin-shih 軍事
fa-shen so 發審所
fa-shu 法術
Fan T'ai-heng 范泰亨
T. Yu-min 右民
Yün-chi 雲吉
Fang Po-t'ang 方伯堂
T. Ts'un-chih 存之
Feng Chun-kuang 馮煥光
T. Chu-ju 竹儒
Chu-yü 竹漁
Ho Ying-ch'í 何應祺
T. Ching-hai 錦海
hou-lu liang-t'ai 後路糧台
hsiang-jen 招人
hsiang-ming 招命
hsiang-shih 饗事
hsing-ming 刑名
Hsiü Shou 徐壽
T. Hsueh-ts’un 雪村
Hsueh Fu-ch'eng 薛福成
T. Shu-yüin 松粼
H. Yung-an 鄧庵
hsün-ch’a 巡查
hsün-pu 巡捕
hu-li liang-t’ai 護理糧台
Hu Lin-i 胡林翼
hu-pu 戶部
Hu Shao-hsün 胡紹勤
T. Wen-fu 文甫
H. Jang-ch’üan 讓泉
Hu Ta-jen 胡大任
Hu Wei-chih 胡蔚之
Hua Heng-fang 華衡芳
T. Jo-t'ing 若汀
huo-shih 火食
i 義
i-chang 翼長
i-fu 衣服
Jung Hung 容閩
T. Ch’üng-fu 純甫
Kan Chin 甘晉
k’an-hsiang 看相
ken-pan 跟班

Kiangnan chi-ch’i chih-tsao-chü 江南機器製造局
ko-shih-k’a 戈什哈
ku-wen 古文
kuan 官
kuan-fang 關防
kuan-kung-tu 管公塲
kuan-shu-ch’i 管書啓
Kuan-wen 官文
k’uei-shuai 揆帥
k’ung-pai chih-chao 空白執照
Kuo K’un-tao 郭昆棠
T. Chung-pi 仲毅
H. 1-ch’eng 意誠
Shu-sou 樓叟
Kuo Sung-tao 郭嵩塲
T. Yun-hsien 雲仙
Kuo-tzu-chien 國子監
li-chin 畿金
Li Han-chang 李翰章
T. Hsiao-ch’üan 總荃
Li Hsü-i 李續宜
H. Hsi-an 希庵
Li Hsü-pin 李續賓
H. Ti-an 廷庵
Li Hu-sheng 李笏生
Li Huan 李桓
Li Jung 李撫
H. Shen-fu 申甫
Li Meng-ch’ü 宋群
Li Shan-lan 李善蘭
T. Jen-shu 壬秋
H. Ch’iu-jen 秋紅
li-shih 吏事
Li Yuan-tu 李元度
T. Tz’u-ch’ing 次青
Hu-t’ing 筠庭

143
H. T'ien-yueh-shan-chiao

Ch'ao-jan-lao-jen 超然老人

Liu Hsiang 劉庠
T. Tz'u-min 慈民
H. Tun-sou 鈞叟
Liu Jui-fen 劉瑞芬
T. Chih-t'ien 芝田
Liu Jung 劉君
T. Meng-jung 孟容
H. Hsia-hsien 霞仙
Lo Hsüan 羅萱
T. Po-i 伯宜
Lo Ping-chang 騷東章
Lo Tse-nan 羅澤南

Lun-ch'uan hu-shang-chii 輪船護商局

Lü-yüng 綠營
Men-yin 門印
Mi-chü 米局
Ming-chiao 名教
Mo Yu-chih 莫友芝
T. Tzu-ssu 子偲
H. Lü-t'ing 郎亭
Mu-fu 幕府
Mu-k'o 幕客
Mu-liao 幕僚
Mu-pin 幕賓
Mu-yu 幕友
Nei chiin-hsieh so 內軍械所
Nei yin-ch'ien so 內銀錢所
Pai-chang 百長
Pao Ch'ao 鮑超
Pao-hsiao chiü 報銷局
P'eng Yü-lin 彭玉麟
T. Hsueh-ch'in 雪琴

Pi-mo 譜墨
P'ü-chü 譜序
Shan-nei liang-t'ai 山內糧台
Shao-hsing shih-yeh 紹興師爺
Shao I-ch'en 邵懿辰
T. Wei-hsi 位西
Shao-pien 善弁
Shao-yeh 少爺
Sheng-chii 省局
Shih-shou pu-chao 實收部照
Shih-wu 世務
Shu-ch'i 書啓
Shu-yuan 書院
So 所
Sui-shen 隨身
Ta-ch'i 大旗
T'a-ch'i-pu 塔齊布
T'ao 陶
T'ao Shou-yü 陶壽玉
Teng Fu-lun 登輔論
T. Mi-chih 弘之
Ti-wen so 遞文所
Ting Shih-fang 丁石芳
T'ing-chi 廷寄
Ts'ai-fang chung-i chiü 訪謁忠義局
Tseng Chi-tse 曹紀澤
Tseng Kuo-ch'üan 曹國荃
Tseng Kuo-hua 曹國華
Tso Tsung-t'ang 左宗棠
T. Chi-kao 李高
Tsung-chii 總局
Tsung-pan liang-t'ai 總辦糧台
T'uan-lien 團練
Tui-ts'e 對策
Wai-chün-hsieh so 外軍械所
Wai yin-ch'ien so 外銀錢所
Index

Accounting Office, 74, 109, 110, 112
armaments, 77, 124
armies, regional, 14, 15
Army of the Green Standard, 76
arsenals, 77, 124, 126, 127, 131, 132
barbarian affairs, 39, 58, 59. See also foreign affairs
biographical writings, 31, 34n, 39, 41n, 125
Board of Revenue, 93, 94, 97, 100, 103
bond servants, 25
budget, of the central government, 94, 98
bureaucracy: characteristics of, 118-120; ideal type, 118; rational orientation in, 119
bureaucracy, traditional Chinese, 14, 16, 18, 24, 26-30, 44, 82, 83, 88, 89, 91-93, 116, 121, 123, 128
bureaucratic society, 120; change within, 119
bureaucratization, 117, 120
careers, new kind, 17, 27, 29, 31, 91, 123, 126, 127, 128, 131; alternative area for service, 29, 120, 123, 129
careers, official, 64, 87, 89, 91, 122, 123, 125, 128, 129
centralization: of authority, 92, 93, 117; in Tseng's organization, 110, 111
Chang Chih-tung, 129-132
Chang Fei, 54n, 55
Chang Fu-fan, 59
Chang Hsii-jung, 38-39
Chang Yü-chao, 52
Chao Lieh-wen, 31n, 39, 53, 56-70, 84-89, 125-127, 131
Ch'en Ai, 38, 39, 42, 82
Ch'en Nai, 50, 51, 55
Ch'en Shih-chieh, 36
Ch'eng Hsueh-ch'i, 37
Cheng Te-ch'i, 107, 109n
Chiang I-feng, 108n
chiao-pin-lu k'ang-i, 61n
ch'ien-ku, 22n
Chin An-ch'ing, 88n
Chou Feng-shan, 108n
Chü, 75, 88, 119
clerks, 23, 25, 45, 59, 71, 76
Commissariat, 74, 76-78, 80, 110, 112n; Disbursement, 113; Inland, 113; Outer River, 113; Rear, 107
contributions, 100, 102-105, 127; commissions and certificates for, 103-106, 109
corruption: in military supply and recruiting, 79. See also mu-fu: corruption in customs duties, 60, 101
Disbursement Office, 74, 110, 112, 113
District Magistrate, 71, 80
divination, 55, 56
education, 122, 124, 126, 129, 131, 132. See also Foreign Language Training School; Educational Mission to the U.S.
Educational Mission to the U.S., 127, 131
emulation of models, 41-44, 82. See also Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit
engineers, 77, 124-126, 131
ethical vs. technical (ideological vs. practical) orientations, 40, 128, 130
eunuchs, 25
examination system, 23, 24, 27-29, 47, 86, 89, 122, 126, 128
expenditures: by central government, 97, 98; by Tseng, 96-98
expertise, 14, 16, 44, 123, 128; scientific, 124; technical, 14, 22, 44, 70, 82, 122. See also practical experience and competence; specialization
Fan T'ai-heng, 33, 34, 36
Fang Po-t'ang, 34
Feng Chüan-kuang, 124
Feng Kuei-fen, 61
feudalization, 117, 120
financial administration, Tseng Kuo-fan's, 13, 47, 48, 73, 74, 76-79, 95, 112, 124; accounting by, 97, 98, 108-110, 113, 114; autonomy, 110; evolution of, 105,
108, 109, 111, 112, 114; fiscal planning in, 95, 111; personnel in, 104, 107–109, 114, 124; provincial boundaries in, 106–108, 114
fiscal system, Ch’ing, 92–94, 98, 104–106, 113
Folsom, Kenneth, 16, 46
foreign affairs, 31, 40, 60, 62, 65, 123–125, 131. See also barbarian affairs
Foreign Language Training School, 62, 131, 132
Forwarding Department, 80, 82
General Staff, 49, 74, 76, 78, 81, 84, 91, 124
generalists, 70, 128, 132, 133; ethical orientation, 40, 44, 129; tradition of, 14, 126, 127, 129; traditional preeminence, 121–123; in Tseng’s organization, 57
gentry, 71, 77, 107; local gentry, 81
Ho Ying-ch’i, 52, 53
Hsiang Army, 80, 84n, 85, 120
hsing-ming, 22n
Hsü Shou, 126
Hsueh Fu-ch’eng, 37, 46, 90
Hu Lin-i, 34, 54n, 55
Hu Shao-hsün, 82
Hu Ta-jen, 107, 109n
Hu Tse-shun, 42n
Hu Wei-chih, 80n
Hua Heng-fang, 126
ideology, 40n, 43, 44, 121, 125, 129, 130
indoctrination, 42, 44, 81, 99. See also Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit
industrial enterprises, 131
inland waterways, 59, 60
innovation. See modernization
institutional changes, 13, 14, 16, 26, 116, 121, 123
Judicial Department, 77
Jung Hung, 115, 126, 127, 131
Kan Chin, 107, 109n
Kiangnan Arsenal, 124, 126, 127, 131
Kiangsi: as economic base, 110, 112, 114; provincial military forces, 113; Tseng’s office in, 107
Ku Hung-ming, 129
ku-wen, 35, 52
kuan, 88
kuan-fang, 88
Kuan-wen, 54n, 59
Kuo K’un-tao, 36, 47–50, 79, 124
Kuo Sung-tao, 47, 60, 61
laws, 30, 71, 121
legal secretary, 30. See also hsing-ming
Li Han-chang, 78, 107, 108n, 109, 110, 113, 114
Li Hsiu-ch’eng, 68, 69n
Li Hsi-pin, 54n, 108n
Li Hu-sheng, 56, 77n
Li Huan, 113
Li Hung-ch’ang, 16, 21, 34, 37, 38, 46, 49, 62, 67, 68, 78, 84, 90n, 117n, 126, 130–132
Li Jung, 49, 50, 76
Li Meng-ch’un, 108n
Li Shan-lan, 125, 126, 131
Li Yuan-tu, 34, 37, 50, 51, 55, 76, 108n
likin, 79, 101, 102, 104, 105, 109, 111–114, 120, 127
literati. See scholars
Liu Hsiang, 34
Liu Jui-fen, 36, 37, 82
Liu Jung, 36, 47, 48, 79, 84, 124
Lo Hsüan, 34, 35
Lo Ping-chang, 46–48, 54n
Lo Tse-nan, 108n
local administration, 19, 24, 71–73, 77, 80; complexities and burdens, 23, 24. See also provincial administration
loyalty, 41, 42. See also Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit
marine forces, 110, 113
militarization, 14, 15n
military organization, Tseng Kuo-fan’s, 13, 48, 74; detachments under Tseng, 108, 110; discipline within army, 67–69, 81, 99; expansion of operations, 104, 105; pay, 95, 97–99, 104; planning, 37, 47, 49, 76, 111, 124; recruitment, 79, 114; size, 95–97
militia forces, 13, 15, 31, 36, 37, 39, 48, 49, 94, 95, 99, 105
Mo Yu-chih, 35
mobilization, 92–94; 120; financial, 95–105; personnel, 44
modernization in China, 15, 16, 60, 62, 116, 121, 126, 127, 129–133; institutional, 26; problems, 14, 31; themes, 17.
See also self-strengthening
monarchy, response to crisis, 13, 14, 120
money changers, 81, 82
moral order, 30, 122, 123, 128
mu-fu, 15, 20, 24, 30, 34, 35, 37, 38, 45, 71, 73, 75, 82, 83, 88, 89, 91, 119, 124–127, 131, 133; basic definition, 20; career, 20, 23, 28, 47, 57, 64, 66; cliques among secretaries, 39; corruption, 27, 28, 45; historical evolution, 22, 23, 27, 29; ideal, 83; mystique, 49, 50, 58, 69; nineteenth century practice, 19, 20, 28; obscure nature, 18, 75; personal character, 15, 18, 53; personal relations, 21, 22, 25, 29, 33, 35, 39, 40, 45, 48–52, 58, 61, 65, 66, 70, 122; remonstrance, 21, 50, 65, 68; significance, 16, 26; study of, 16, 18n, 19, 46; subordination, 21, 22, 25, 33, 35, 48, 49, 58, 65, 66, 75, 82, 83, 122; system, 15, 17, 18, 20, 38, 46, 65, 70, 122, 123, 127, 128; technical competence, 21, 29, 70; terminology, 20, 21.

See also “Public” and “Private”

mu-k'ao, 20
mu-liao, 20, 22, 64, 83, 85
mu-pin, 20
mu-yu, 20, 22, 25, 27, 46, 48, 49, 51, 55, 57, 58, 73, 75, 76, 78, 80, 83, 87
Munitions Department, 74, 77, 124, 125

Nanking: massacre at, 69; siege of, 61, 62, 65–67, 69

Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit, 42–44, 81, 82, 86
official communications, 80
Opium War, 92
orderlies, 76n

Pao Ch'ao, 55
personnel: competition for, 90; liberalization in the employment of, 90; promotion of, 60, 73, 83, 85, 87–91; training, 73, 83, 84, 87, 91, 124
physiognomy, 84, 85, 87
p'i-chü system, 87, 89n
P'ing Yü-lin, 54n, 66, 108n
practical experience and competence, 40, 44, 62, 91, 123, 124, 128, 129; as bureaucratic characteristic, 119; See also expertise
private bureaucracy, 14, 15, 17, 46, 75, 87, 88, 91, 120, 123, 124, 127; correspondence with idea type, 118
professionalism, 16, 17, 27–29, 121–123, 125, 127, 128, 133. See also careers, new kind
provincial administration, 20, 78, 79, 107; of Kiangsi, 108, 110. See also local administration
provincial subsidies, 100–102, 105
“Public” and “Private,” 24–26, 114, 116, 123; as mode of political activity 120; private means 121, 123, 128
public spirit, 41–43. See also Office for the Promotion of Loyalty and Public Spirit

recommendation: to court, 63, 64, 88–91, 126; personal, 38, 39, 58. See also p'i-chü system
recruitment of talent, 30, 132; official recruitment, 25, 82, 89; by Tseng, 30, 44, 64, 87, 88; Tseng's methods, 36–40. See also examination system; recommendation; interviews
regionalization, 13, 117, 120
Rice Office, 81, 82

salt monopoly, 100, 104
scholars, 34–36, 41, 43, 51, 52, 56, 57, 116, 121, 123, 125. See also Tseng Kuo-fan's organization: scholars in scientists, 125, 126, 131
self-strengthening, 60, 129, 131, 132
Shanghai, 61–63, 67, 125, 131; as source of revenue, 104
Shao I-ch'en, 55
Shen Pao-chen, 54n
shipyard, 74, 124
shu-chü, 22n
so, 75, 88, 119
specialists, 21, 40, 44, 57, 70, 121–123, 127, 130, 132; financial, 114; foreign affairs, 58, 61, 84; recruitment of, 35. See also engineers; legal secretary, scientists
specialization, 14, 17, 29, 57, 70, 82, 91, 121, 127, 132, 133; as bureaucratic characteristic, 119. See also expertise; professionalism
Steamship Convoy Office, 81n
steamships, 61, 126
Supply Office, 107, 110

Taiping Rebellion: defectors, 37; Heavenly King of the Taipings, 62, 68, 69; plunder by, 99; suppression of, 13, 14, 32, 40, 56, 83, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 111, 127; as watershed, 13
talent, 31; cultivation of, 32, 33, 84, 85, 87; recalcitrant, 33–35
T'ao Shou-yü, 107, 109n
taxation, 71, 92, 93, 104, 113, 121
Teng Fu-lun, 56
Ting Shih-fang, 80n
trade, 59, 60
translation projects, 124–126, 131
Treasury Department, 74, 76, 78
treaty settlements with foreign powers,
59, 60
Tseng Chi-tse, 61n
Tseng Kuo-ch'üian, 37, 56, 62–69, 88,
108, 113; mu-fu, 63
Tseng Kuo-fan: accomplishment, 112;
ambiguous official position, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113; appreciation of his position, 112, 129, 130;
autonomy, 114–117, 120;
character, 32, 33, 50, 53–58, 81, 86, 112, 115; concern for morality, 43;
contribution to China's transformation, 15, 83, 116; control of finances, 120; control of personnel, 53, 83, 88, 120;
ideological commitments, 40, 43; correspondence, 45, 48, 54; as Governor-General, 38, 55, 58, 65, 78; as innovator, 13, 15, 16, 83, 90, 121, 129, 130; leadership, 53–57; literary activity, 56; loyalty, 116, 117; personal daily routine, 54–56; retirement, 47, 95, 108, 110; students, 52; suspicion of the monarchy toward, 116; use of men, 31–33
Tseng Kuo-fan's organization:
character, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 89, 92, 98, 105, 108, 115, 117; compared to conventional mu-fu, 71, 73, 75, 83, 88, 91; examinations in mu-fu, 85–87; friction with local society, 77, 81; genesis, 14, 15, 71, 73, 105, 107; headquarters, 38, 56, 58, 79
80, 107, 110, 113; inner mu-fu, 45, 46, 57, 73, 75; instructions to special functionaries, 127, 128;
interviewing personnel, 36–40, 57, 84; Kiangsi Provincial Office, 107; lesser staff, 45; mobility, 39, 71;
mu-fu, 34, 35, 37, 38, 45–70, 73,
75, 76, 82–88, 91, 119, 124–127, 131; opposition of local officials, 95, 100, 105, 106; outer mu-fu, 46, 76; political implications, 34, 115; private messenger service, 81; reorganization, 47, 73, 108, 109; retinue, 45, 52, 53, 76, 78–80; routine secretarial work in mu-fu, 48, 59, 84; scholars in, 13, 34–36, 38, 51, 52, 56, 57, 125; semi-official status, 14, 88, 119; size, 79, 80; supra provincial orientation, 13, 110, 111, 114. See also financial administration, Tseng Kuo-fan's; military organization, Tseng Kuo-fan's
Tseng Kuo-hua, 108
Tso Shu-te, 41n
Tso Tsung-t'ang, 46–47, 54n, 58
Tsungli Yamen, 60
T'ung-wen-kuan, 126

See also
financial administration, Tseng Kuo-fan's;
military organization, Tseng Kuo-fan's

Tseng Kuo-hua, 108
Tso Shu-te, 41n
Tso Tsung-t'ang, 46–47, 54n, 58
Tsungli Yamen, 60
T'ung-wen-kuan, 126

See also
financial administration, Tseng Kuo-fan's; military organization, Tseng Kuo-fan's

Weber, Max, 118
wei-yuan, 75, 119, 127
Western learning, 129–132
White Lotus Rebellion, 92, 97
Wu Chia-pin, 43, 51, 52
Wu Min-shu, 35
Wu San-kuei, 116

Yang Tsai-fu. See Yang Yüeh-pin
Yang Wan-chin, 59
Yang Yüeh-pin (Yang Tsai-fu), 54n, 66, 108n
Yangtze provinces, 60, 98, 99, 103, 107
yin, 88
Yü-k'o, 55
Yü Lin, 107, 109n
yuan, 75, 88

Yung Wing. See Jung Hung
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