Records of the Grand Historian of China

TRANSLATED FROM THE *Shih chi* OF SSU-MA CH'IEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

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This translation is dedicated to my Father and Mother

FOREWORD

This translation has been undertaken for the Columbia College program of Translations from the Oriental Classics in the belief that Ssu-ma Ch'ien's monumental *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian) can be read not only as history but as literature, and not by the China specialist alone but by the educated reader in general. Generations of scholars—Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—have studied and commented upon the *Shih chi* as the most important historical source for a knowledge of ancient China. Had Dr. Watson a lifetime to give to it, he might have attempted to recapitulate this massive scholarship for the Western student, and it would have been no more than the *Shih chi* deserved. But the heirs of the Chinese tradition have also loved this book as a literary classic, and if Dr. Watson has provided a translation which permits us to enjoy it that way, much as it came from the hands of Ssu-ma Ch'ien himself, this too the *Shih chi* well deserves.

It is a mark of the Chinese tradition, in contrast to other Asian civilizations, that it gave a high place to historical writing. This would have been so if only because Confucius and his followers considered history to have such a great didactic value. But its importance might still have been purely academic or official had not Ssu-ma Ch'ien transcended the limitations of his role as court historian and produced a book which helped to form people's tastes in literature from that time on. Certainly if those touched by Confucian culture tended to read history as today we read fiction, it was because Ssu-ma Ch'ien's work made them feel in a special way the fascination of history. Thus when Lady Murasaki's famous *Tale of Genji* appeared in Japan, many people thought she had taken the *Shih chi* as her model, because its author, uniquely among earlier writers, had portrayed individual human lives as intimately as she had, in all their grandeur and pathos and variety. This the reader of Dr. Watson's translation will also soon appreciate.

Wm. Theodore de Bary

Kyoto, 1960

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Ssu-ma Ch'ien to his friend Jen An

A man has only one death. That death may be as weighty as Mount T'ai, or it may be as light as a goose feather. It all depends upon the way he uses it. . . .

It is the nature of every man to love life and hate death, to think of his relatives and look after his wife and children. Only when a man is moved by higher principles is this not so. Then there are things which he must do. . . .

Yet the brave man does not necessarily die for honor, while even the coward may fulfill his duty. Each takes a different way to exert himself. Though I might be weak and cowardly and seek shamelessly to prolong my life, yet I know full well the difference between what course ought to be followed and what rejected. How could I bring myself to sink into the shame of ropes and bonds? If even the lowest slave and scullion maid can bear to commit suicide, why should not one like myself be able to do what has to be done? But the reason I have not refused to bear these ills and have continued to live, dwelling in vileness and disgrace without taking my leave, is that I grieve that I have things in my heart which I have not been able to express fully, and I am shamed to think that after I am gone my writings will not be known to posterity. . . .

Before I had finished my rough manuscript, I met with this calamity. It is because I regretted that it had not been completed that I submitted to the extreme penalty without rancor. When I have truly completed this work, I shall deposit it in the Famous Mountain archives. If it may be handed down to men who will appreciate it, and penetrate to the villages and great cities, then though I should suffer a thousand mutilations, what regret would I have?

VOLUME I

Early Years of the Han Dynasty

209 to 141 B.C.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Not much is known about the life of the Chinese historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien outside of the little information he gives us in the autobiography appearing at the end of his life work, the *Shih chi,* or *Records of the Historian*. Most scholars place his birth in 145 B.C. and agree that he died around 90 B.C., so that his lifetime more or less parallels that of Emperor Wu, the vigorous, strong-willed ruler who brought the Han dynasty to its peak of power and at whose court Ssu-ma Ch'ien spent most of his life.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien's father, Ssu-ma T'an, was given the position of grand historian at the court of Emperor Wu shortly after that ruler's accession in 141 B.C., and at Ssu-ma T'an's death in 110 B.C., Ssu-ma Ch'ien succeeded to the post. The official duties of the grand historian seem to have been largely connected with astrology and divination, though Ssu-ma T'an, perhaps on his own initiative, planned to write a work of history and began to collect material for it. In accordance with his father's dying request, Ssu-ma Ch'ien took up the task when he became grand historian and spent the next twenty-some years bringing it to completion. Midway in his work he aroused the ire of Emperor Wu and was condemned to suffer castration. Although it was customary under such circumstances for men of honor to commit suicide, Ssu-ma Ch'ien chose to bear the indignity in order to complete his manuscript and justify himself in the eyes of posterity. Two thousand years of admiring readers have amply rewarded his bitter decision.

The result of his labors is a monumental work in 130 chapters covering the history of the Chinese people, as well as of the foreign peoples known to China, from the earliest times down to the lifetime of the historian. In our present version of the work, at least one chapter is missing altogether and several others appear to be fragmentary or incomplete. Compared to the sad state in which the works of some of

Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Western contemporaries such as Polybius or Livy have come down to us, however, we can only marvel at the excellent condition of the text.

The *Shih chi* is divided into five large sections. The first section, entitled "Basic Annals," comprises twelve chapters devoted to the histories of the earlier dynastic houses or, in the case of the reigning Han dynasty, to the lives of individual emperors. These are followed by ten "Chronological Tables" listing in graph form the important events of the past with their dates. Next come eight "Treatises" on such subjects as rites, music, astronomy, religious affairs, and economics. These are followed by thirty chapters entitled "Hereditary Houses," which for the most part deal with the histories of the various feudal states of pre-Ch'in China. The work ends with seventy chapters entitled "Biographies" or "Accounts," devoted to the lives of famous men of history, or to the foreign peoples and countries with which China had contact. Within each section the chapters are arranged chronologically, but the grouping of the material into sections and the essentially biographical approach of most of the chapters necessitates considerable scattering of the data pertaining to any given period, as well as frequent recapitulation in the narrative.

Early histories in chronicle form, notably the famous *Spring and Autumn Annals* of the state of Lu, traditionally supposed to have been edited by Confucius, as well as collections of speeches and historical anecdotes, had existed before the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien. But the form of the *Shih chi,* with its division of material into "Annals," "Treatises," "Biographies," etc., seems to have been Ssu-ma Ch'ien's own creation. In spite of certain obvious drawbacks, it has been regarded by Chinese historians as a masterpiece of form, and was adopted in the twenty-four "Dynastic Histories," the official accounts compiled to cover all of the dynasties from the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien to the present century.

According to tradition, Chinese rulers employed historiographers at their courts as early as a thousand years before the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, and no doubt a vast number of chronicles and similar historical materials came into existence during this early period. Unfortunately, most of these were lost in the wars and uprisings that

accompanied the unification of China under the Ch'in dynasty, and its successor, the Han, or were deliberately destroyed by the Ch'in's notorious "burning of the books." As a result, Ssu-ma Ch'ien in his account of pre-Ch'in history was forced to rely heavily on two or three well-known sources, such as the *Tso chuan,* or the *Intrigues of the Warring States,* and in places had to piece out his narrative with legend and popular romance. With the treatment of Ch'in and Han times, however, Ssu-ma Ch'ien's narrative takes on depth and verisimilitude; his characters cease to be moral stereotypes and become fully rounded personalities. These chapters, dealing with events close to or contemporary with his own lifetime, form the heart of his history and display the most original and important aspects of his genius. Accordingly it is these later sections which I have chosen to translate here.

The exploits of mankind being basically much the same in any age or clime, the English reader, I expect, will find little in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's account of the emperors, generals, and statesmen of the Han dynasty that is not already familiar to him from the history of the Classical West. Indeed, Ssu-ma Ch'ien's whole approach to history—his concern with the didactic import of his story, his emphasis upon the life and importance of the individual, his skepticism and relative lack of interest in the supernatural—show a striking similarity to that of the historians of ancient Greece and Rome. Even the literary devices which he uses to create his dramatic effects resemble those of his Western contemporaries. Though there is no evidence that he intended his work to be declaimed in public as did the Greek or Roman historians, he was hardly less concerned than they with rhetoric and questions of style. Like Thucydides or Tacitus, he relies heavily upon elaborate and probably fictitious speeches put into the mouths of his characters to explain and advance the action and to delineate personality, speeches composed with the same balanced periods, the hyperboles, the erudite allusions and homely metaphors familiar to us in the Western rhetorician's art.

In addition to these formal speeches, however, the Chinese historian makes very free use of direct discourse. The past is visualized as a series of dramatic episodes in which, instead of describing the action,

the historian makes his characters speak aloud. Repeatedly we find the narrative serving only to set the scene, while the burden of the story is carried forward by the discourse of the participants. If, in the pages that follow, the reader from time to time has a distinct impression that he is reading a novel rather than a work of history, it is because of this characteristic Chinese fondness for direct speech.

Classical Chinese, it should be noted, is capable of a breathtaking economy and vigor of expression. Chinese historians in particular prize terseness above almost any other quality of style, and though the *Shih chi* is relatively verbose compared to other early historical works, its narrative still maintains a swiftness and leanness that can seldom be reproduced in another language. There are few passages of pure description, few of the digressions and leisurely asides we are accustomed to in the works of Greek and Roman historians. All is speech and action, the two traditional components of Chinese history.

In the two thousand years since its appearance, the *Shih chi* has been widely and affectionately read not only by educated Chinese but by men of learning in Korea and Japan, as well. The reason for its continued popularity and the incalculable influence it has had upon the literatures of these countries lies undoubtedly in its moving portraits of the great men of the past, its dramatic episodes and deft anecdotes. Accordingly, it is these aspects of the *Shih chi*—giving it interest as a collection of good stories—which I have been most concerned to reproduce in the translation.

I have avoided the use of Chinese technical terms or titles which might prove distracting, or of awkward sounding translations of such titles and terms, no matter how faithfully they might reproduce the meaning of the originals. Again, I have used as few Chinese weights and measures as possible, employing English substitutes in cases where the exact value of the measurement did not seem of great importance to the sense of the narrative. I have occasionally translated place names, such as White Horse Ford, where the original meaning of the name is still immediately apparent in the Chinese.

In another important respect I have sacrificed strict fidelity to readability. Most of the major figures appearing in the *Shih chi* have two given names, a familiar and a polite one, and a variety of military,

official, and noble titles by which they are referred to at various times. Some commentators insist that Ssu-ma Ch'ien, by the particular way he chooses to refer to his characters at particular times, is attempting to convey subtle moral judgments on their worth and dignity. I have grave doubts about this theory, but, however valid it may be, I have felt compelled to sacrifice such subtleties to considerations of intelligibility. The Western reader, to whom the profusion of unfamiliar names which follows will be trial enough, can hardly be expected to carry in his head a complicated set of titles and ranks, while continual bracketing to assist identification would prove tiresome. As far as possible I have therefore chosen one name to refer to a person and used it throughout, regardless of how the original reads. The one exception is the hero of this volume, Liu Chi, the founder of the Han dynasty, who in the course of his rise to power is variously known as "governor of P'ei," "king of Han," and finally "Emperor Kao-tsu."

In addition to such titles, the Chinese language employs an elaborate set of pronouns and polite terms of address in direct discourse. English, to be sure, possesses acceptable equivalents such as "Your Majesty" or "Your Lordship." But too frequent use of such terms would, I fear, give a labored and archaic tone to the translation, and nothing could be farther from the style of the original. I have consequently used honorific expressions only occasionally to set the tone of a discourse, and hope that the reader will imagine that the appropriate air of humility is sustained throughout. Again I have attempted to vary in the translation some of the set formulas of the original, such as the ubiquitous "he said" or "he asked saying." Good Chinese permits such formulas where good English demands variety, and it seems pointless, merely for the sake of literalness, to make Ssu-ma Ch'ien sound like a clumsy schoolboy. Where proper names or historical allusions are used metaphorically, I have, as Robert Graves would say, "brought up" into the translation whatever information is necessary to make their meaning comprehensible. I have avoided footnotes wherever possible; in most cases what is not clear at first will, I believe, become so as the reader proceeds to later chapters. I have occasionally enclosed in parentheses one or two sentences of the original which appear to be in the nature of an aside.

I am aware that some of these practices may render the translation unsatisfactory to specialists who are interested in the *Shih chi* as a source for historical data, rather than as a unified work of literature. Yet any attempt to please all readers, specialists and non-specialists alike, would almost certainly end by pleasing none. Michael Grant, in the introduction to his translation of Tacitus' *Annals,* states his opinion that "except as a mere crib, an unreadable translation is useless." [1] Though the wording is perhaps a bit drastic, I fully agree with this dictum in principle, and ask the reader to keep it in mind in judging what follows.[2]

The maps which have been provided will, I hope, assist the reader in locating the various feudal kingdoms and principal cities mentioned. The China of this time is centered in the north, along the Yellow River valley. In the west, surrounded by a barrier of mountains and rivers, are the capital city of Hsien-yang and the heartland of Ch'in. South of the river is the area of Ch'u, whose people bear the house of Ch'in a bitter hatred and cherish the memory of their former kings. To the north are the areas of Wei, Chao, Tai, and Yen, and near the river's mouth on the Shantung Peninsula the sites of the states of Ch'i and Lu. Scattered about the plain stand hundreds of walled cities within which the people live, emerging from their gates during the day to till the fields, and before whose walls the armies of the rebellion and the contending forces of the rivals, Hsiang Yü and Liu Chi, fight and die. Between lie swamps and mountain wastes, the home of fugitives and outlaws.

The Table of Contents may serve as a guide to the main actors in the drama, since the chapters are titled by the names of the men whose biographies they recount. In addition, there appear in the narrative a number of minor characters who, as Addison says, "have sounding names given them for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head." I trust that as the reader continues he will become familiar with the important

[1] *Tactitus on Imperial Rome,* trans. by Michael Grant (Penguin Classics), p. 24.

[2] For a much fuller account of early Chinese historiography and of the life and work of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the reader is referred to the translator's study, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien: Grand Historian of China* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1957).

characters, and that these others will not distract him. In particular I would warn him not to be taken aback by the profusion of petty generals and revolutionaries appearing in the first chapter. Outside of a few like Chang Erh and Ch'en Yü, who are the subjects of a later chapter, most of these men play little part in what follows. The rebellion of Ch'en She loosed upon the empire a flood of confusion and revolt, and if the reader finds himself confused as well, this is probably the precise effect which Ssu-ma Ch'ien was aiming at. It is one of those periods of political chaos which the Chinese call a "muddy age." But let not the reader be dismayed. As he proceeds, the water will clear.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE ON THE TEXT

On the whole I have followed the text of the *Shih chi* as it appears in the edition entitled *Shiki kaichū kōshō* (Tokyo, 1934), edited and with a commentary in Chinese by Takikawa Kametarō, which has recently been reprinted. This I have found to be the most readable and convenient edition, though I have had occasion to differ with the punctuation at numerous points and have in places adopted what appear to be better readings from the *Po-na-pen* edition, or from parallel passages in the *Han shu*. The more important variant readings adopted are noted in footnotes. For the chapters on Hsiang Yü and Kao-tsu I have consulted with great profit the French translation of these chapters by Edouard Chavannes in *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien* (Paris, E. Leroux, 1895–1905), Vol. I, as well as the translation of the parallel *Han shu* text, the "Annals of Kao-tsu," by Homer H. Dubs, in *The History of the Former Han by Pan Ku* (London, Waverly Press, 1939–44), Vol. I. For the chapter on Han Hsin I am indebted to the English translation by John De Francis, "Biography of the Marquis of Huai-yin," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* X (1947), 179–215. I have also consulted the Japanese translation by Kuda Rentarō in the *Kokuyaku kambun taisei* series; the new modern-language Japanese translation by Otake Fumio and Otake Takeo, *Shiki* (Tokyo, Kōbundō, 1957–58); that by Noguchi Sadao and others, *Shiki* (Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1958–59); and the selected translations in *Shiki, So-kan-hen,* by Tanaka Kenji and Ikkai Tomoyoshi, *Chūgoku-kotensen* series (Tokyo, 1958). In preparing the maps I have been greatly aided by the maps appearing in these works, particularly those in the Dubs and De Francis translations. Finally, I am deeply grateful to Professors Yoshikawa Kōjirō and Tanaka Kenji of Kyoto University for their frequent help and guidance, though they are in no way responsible for the shortcomings of my work.

The Founding of the Han Dynasty

(*PARTS I–VI*)

Ssu-ma Ch'ien begins his account of Chinese history in the *Shih chi* with a description of the marvelous deeds and reigns of the legendary "Five Emperors," of whom the last two, Yao and Shun, are so often cited as paragons of political virtue. This is followed by an account of the Hsia, Shang or Yin, and Chou dynasties, the so-called Three Dynasties of antiquity. Archeological evidence has so far confirmed the existence of only the last two of these, and it is still uncertain how much actual authority the Shang and early Chou rulers wielded over the area of North China as a whole. The *Shih chi* and other Han works tend to depict these early dynasties as widespread and unified empires ruled by a universally revered "Son of Heaven," though in fact they were probably more often loose confederations of city-states. Certainly by the time of Confucius in the sixth century B.C. the Chou kings had become powerless figureheads and China was divided into a number of autonomous states engaged in a constant struggle for expansion or survival. The number of these states eventually narrowed to half a dozen, among which the most powerful were Ch'i in the northeast, Ch'u in the south, and Ch'in in the west. This last, with its capital in the so-called area within the Pass, near present-day Sian in Shensi, continued to grow in size and power until, under the leadership of the famous Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, or First Emperor of the Ch'in, it succeeded in 221 B.C. in conquering the other states and uniting China under one rule.

The First Emperor in the course of his long and vigorous reign did all he could to stamp out the memory of the states which he had overthrown and to weld their people into a single nation, dividing the area of China into thirty-six provinces ruled by governors and magistrates appointed by the central government. But the violence of the changes he wrought and the harshness of his rule aroused widespread discontent. His successor, the Second Emperor, was an incompetent weakling who was completely dominated by his eunuch chamberlain,

Chao Kao. In the very first year of his reign, 209 B.C., the unrest broke out in open revolt, an uprising in the area of the old kingdom of Ch'u led by a peasant upstart named Ch'en She. Although Ch'en She was soon defeated, he had set an example, and soon leaders arose in other states, all determined either to become petty kings themselves or to restore to power the royal families of the extinct kingdoms. It appeared that China was destined to return to its former state of disunity and strife.

But the memory of Ch'in's unified empire and the idealized empires of the ancient past, which was not forgotten, in the end proved stronger than local loyalties. Under the leadership of a second peasant adventurer, Liu Pang or Liu Chi, China was once again conquered and brought beneath the rule of a single house. Because he had at one stage in his rise to power been granted the title "King of Han," Liu Chi called his new dynasty the Han and set about securing its position and organizing its government in such a way as to avoid the fatal harshness of the Ch'in. He and his ministers did their work well, and the Han dynasty, except for one brief period of eclipse in the middle, maintained its rule for four hundred years, from its founding in 206 B.C. until its final collapse in A.D. 221.

The present volume begins with the founding of the Han; the main events of this period take place during the years from the beginnings of the rebellion against the Ch'in dynasty in 209 B.C. to the death of Liu Chi, or Kao-tsu, in 195 B.C. The chapters translated have been selected from various sections of the *Shih chi* and arranged in such a way as to present, as nearly as possible, a connected picture. As I have mentioned, however, most of the chapters of the *Shih chi* are centered about the lives of great men. What follows, therefore, is not a continuous narrative but a series of biographies of the major figures in the drama of the founding of the Han, arranged so that they dovetail into each other and into the earlier chapters devoted to the history of the Ch'in dynasty, which are not presented here. The first chapter is a biography of the leader of the first revolt, Ch'en She. This is followed by the biography of Hsiang Yü, the tragic hero of Ch'u who succeeded Ch'en She as the leader of the rebellion and for a while had his way with the whole empire until Liu Chi, the king of Han, rose to challenge

his power and eventually defeat him. Completing the period of revolt and the ensuing struggle between the forces of Ch'u and Han is the biography of the final victor, Liu Chi, posthumously titled Emperor Kao-tsu of the Han. This is followed by a long series of biographies of the men who aided Kao-tsu in establishing the new dynasty or who contended unsuccessfully with him for rule. Because of the biographical nature of each chapter, the reader will at times find himself carried forward into the reigns of Kao-tsu's successors, his son Emperor Hui, his wife Empress Lü, and the rulers who followed them, Emperors Wen and Ching, whose reigns will be dealt with more fully later. He will also discover that, since all these men were more or less contemporaries, the same events are touched upon again and again in successive chapters, sometimes described in more detail than previously, sometimes drastically abbreviated, but each time presented from a slightly different point of view because of the way in which they affect the life of the subject of the chapter. Much of the beauty and interest of the *Shih chi* lies in this subtle division and disposition of material, this technique of viewing a single event or figure through the eyes of a succession of different characters. The personality of the hero, Emperor Kao-tsu, in particular, is carefully and effectively built up through dozens of scenes and anecdotes revealed chapter by chapter until in the end we have seen every facet of his peasant wiliness, his generosity, his notorious bad manners, and the melancholy splendor of his last years. It is a technique which makes considerable demands upon the attention of the reader and may seem more appropriate to a novel than to a work of history, but it will perhaps help to explain why the *Shih chi* has had such a great appeal to the imagination and literary sensibilities of the Chinese and other East Asian peoples. The events of this period are stirring and significant enough, but more than the events it is the men themselves, as they are revealed in the colorful, incisive portraits which Ssu-ma Ch'ien has created, that remain in the memory of the reader.

Part I

THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLT

Shih chi 48: The Hereditary House of Ch'en She

When Chieh and Chou sank into evil, T'ang and Wu rose to replace them. When the way of Chou faltered, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* were made. When Ch'in's rule failed, Ch'en She marched forth. The lords sprang to revolt like a great wind rising, like clouds that cover the sky, until the house of Ch'in at last crumbled. All the world took its cue from Ch'en She's rebellion. Thus I made The Hereditary House of Ch'en She.[1]

Ch'en Sheng, whose polite name was Ch'en She, was a native of Yang-ch'eng; Wu Kuang, or Wu Shu, was from Yang-hsia. When Ch'en She was young, he was working one day in the fields with the other hired men. Suddenly he stopped his plowing and went and stood on a hillock, wearing a look of profound discontent. After a long while he announced, "If I become rich and famous, I will not forget the rest of you!"

The other farm hands laughed and answered, "You are nothing but a hired laborer. How could you ever become rich and famous?"

Ch'en She gave a great sigh. "Oh, well," he said, "how could you little sparrows be expected to understand the ambitions of a swan?"

During the first year of the Second Emperor of Ch'in [209 B.C.],[2] in the seventh month, an order came for a force of nine hundred men from the poor side of the town to be sent to garrison Yü-yang. Ch'en She and Wu Kuang were among those whose turn it was to go, and they were appointed heads of the levy of men.[3] When the group had

[1] This and the summaries which head the other chapters of the translation are taken from Ssu-ma Ch'ien's table of contents in *Shih chi* 130, unless otherwise noted.

[2] Chinese historians customarily record dates by the year of the reigning monarch. Hence we have here the years of the Second Emperor of Ch'in, which will be followed by the years of Han, i.e., of Emperor Kao-tsu of the Han. The Ch'in dynasty began its new year with the tenth month, around our November, a custom continued in the early Han, so that the months run 10, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, with occasional intercalary months.

[3] I.e., they were chosen from among the men of the group to be its leaders;

got as far as Ta-tse County, they encountered such heavy rain that the road became impassable. It was apparent that the men would be unable to reach the appointed place on time, an offense punishable by death. Ch'en She and Wu Kuang accordingly began to plot together. "As things stand, we face death whether we stay or run away," they said, "while if we were to start a revolt we would likewise face death. Since we must die in any case, would it not be better to die fighting for our country?" [4]

"The world has long suffered under Ch'in," said Ch'en She. "From what I have heard, the Second Emperor was a younger son and ought never to have succeeded to the throne. The one who should have been made ruler was Prince Fu-su. But because Fu-su several times remonstrated with the former emperor, he was sent to lead the armies in the field. Someone has told me that, though Fu-su was guilty of no crime, he has been murdered by the Second Emperor. The common people have heard much of Fu-su's worth, but they do not know that he is dead. Hsiang Yen was a general of Ch'u who many times distinguished himself in battle. He took good care of his troops and the people of Ch'u thought fondly of him. Some say that he is dead, but others say that he is only in hiding. Now with the group we have, if we could deceive people into thinking that I am Fu-su and you are Hsiang Yen, we could lead the world in our own tune, and there are sure to be many who will join in the chorus!"

Wu Kuang approved of this idea, and they went to consult a diviner. The diviner guessed what the two were planning, and replied, "Your undertakings will all meet with success. But might you not seek your fortune with the spirits?" [5]

Ch'en She and Wu Kuang were delighted with the idea of enlisting supernatural aid in their scheme. "It must mean that we should first do

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the group as a whole was in turn commanded by officers of the Ch'in government.

[4] I.e., die fighting for the restoration of the former state of Ch'u. Another interpretation would have it mean "die fighting to win a kingdom."

[5] Like all good diviners, this one is careful to answer ambiguously. His remark may be interpreted to mean, "Though your plan may succeed, will you not find yourselves among the spirits of the dead?" But Ch'en She and Wu Kuang prefer to interpret him differently.

something to overawe the men in our group!" they declared, and proceeded to write with cinnabar on a piece of silk: "Ch'en She shall be a king." They stuffed the silk into the belly of a fish someone had caught in a net. When one of the soldiers bought the fish and boiled it for his dinner, he discovered the message in the fish's belly and was greatly astonished. Also Ch'en She secretly sent Wu Kuang to a grove of trees surrounding a shrine which was close to the place where the men were making camp. When night fell, Wu Kuang lit a torch and, partly concealing it under a basket, began to wail like a fox [6] and cry, "Great Ch'u shall rise again! Ch'en She shall be a king!"

The soldiers were filled with alarm, and when dawn came they talked here and there among themselves, pointing and staring at Ch'en She.

Wu Kuang had always been kind to others and many of the soldiers would do anything for him. When the officer in command of the group was drunk, Wu Kuang made a point of openly announcing several times that he was going to run away. In this way Wu Kuang hoped to arouse the commander's anger, get him to punish him, and so stir up the men's ire and resentment. As Wu Kuang had expected, the commander began to beat him, when the commander's sword slipped out of its scabbard. Wu Kuang sprang up, seized the sword, and killed the commander. Ch'en She rushed to his assistance and they proceeded to kill the other two commanding officers as well. Then they called together all the men of the group and announced: "Because of the rain we encountered, we cannot reach our rendezvous on time. And anyone who misses a rendezvous has his head cut off! Even if you should somehow escape with your heads, six or seven out of every ten of you are bound to die in the course of garrison duty. Now, my brave fellows, if you are unwilling to die, we have nothing more to say. But if you would risk death, then let us risk it for the sake of fame and glory! Kings and nobles, generals and ministers—such men are made, not born!"

The men of the garrison all replied, "We are with you!" Then, in order to win the loyalty of the people, Ch'en She and Wu Kuang falsely proclaimed themselves to be Prince Fu-su and Hsiang Yen. Baring

[6] The fox in China and Japan is closely associated with the supernatural.

their right shoulders, they raised the cry of "Great Ch'u!" and built an altar and swore an oath before it, offering as a sacrifice the heads of the commanding officers. Ch'en She set himself up as commander of the army, with Wu Kuang as his colonel, and together they attacked Ta-tse County. After capturing Ta-tse County, they proceeded to attack and capture Chi. They dispatched Ko Ying, a man of Fu-li, with a force to seize control of the area east of Chi, while they themselves attacked Chih, Tsuan, K'u, Che, and Ch'iao, all of which submitted. Recruiting soldiers as they went along, they were able by the time they reached the city of Ch'en to build up a force of six or seven hundred chariots, over a thousand horsemen, and twenty or thirty thousand infantry.

When they attacked Ch'en, neither the governor of the province nor any of the magistrates of the districts under him were in the city. Only one of the governor's aides was present, who engaged them in battle at the Ch'iao Gate but was defeated and killed. They entered the city and quartered there for several days, sending out an order summoning all the village heads and important men of the region to meet with them and plan a course of action. To this the village heads and distinguished men replied, "The general has buckled on armor and taken up his weapons to attack the unrighteous and punish the violence of Ch'in, that he may restore once more the sacred altars of the state of Ch'u. Because of the glory he has won, he deserves to be made a king."

Ch'en She accordingly was made king and given the title "Magnifier of Ch'u," whereupon men in many of the other provinces and districts who had suffered under the Ch'in officials overpowered and murdered their governors and magistrates and allied themselves with Ch'en She.

Ch'en She made Wu Kuang an acting king with supervision over the other leaders of their band, and sent him west to attack Jung-yang. Ch'en She ordered Chang Erh, Ch'en Yü, and Wu Ch'en, a man of Ch'en, to seize the region of Chao, while he sent Teng Tsung, a native of Ju-yin, to seize the province of Chiu-chiang. By this time a countless number of bands consisting of several thousand men each had been formed throughout Ch'u.

When Ko Ying, who had been sent by Ch'en She to seize the land east of Chi, reached Tung-ch'eng, he set up Hsiang Ch'iang as king of Ch'u. Later, hearing that Ch'en She had already become king himself,

he murdered Hsiang Ch'iang and returned to report what he had done to Ch'en She. Ch'en She executed him, and dispatched Chou Shih, a native of Wei, to march north and seize the region of Wei.

Meanwhile Wu Kuang surrounded the city of Jung-yang, but Li Yu, the governor of San-ch'uan, held the city, and Wu Kuang was unable to conquer it.

Ch'en She summoned the distinguished men of the state of Ch'u to meet with him and plan the next move. He appointed Ts'ai Tz'u, the lord of Fang, a man of Shang-ts'ai, as his chief minister. Chou Wen, a man of some distinction in Ch'en, had formerly been diviner of auspicious days in the army of Hsiang Yen and had also served under the lord of Ch'un-shen. When he declared himself adept in military affairs, Ch'en She presented him with the seals of a general and sent him west to attack Ch'in. Gathering troops as he went along, he entered the Pass[7] with a force of a thousand chariots and twenty or thirty thousand infantry and camped at Hsi. Ch'in ordered its privy treasurer, Chang Han, to free all the conscript laborers, household slaves, and their children at Mount Li,[8] and lead them forth in an attack upon the army of Ch'u. They succeeded in routing it, whereupon Chou Wen fled back through the Pass in defeat, halting and camping at Ts'ao-yang for several months. Chang Han pursued him and defeated him again, and Chou Wen once more fled, camping at Min-ch'ih for ten days or more. Here Chang Han inflicted a final defeat. Chou Wen cut his throat, and his army ceased all further resistance.

When Wu Ch'en reached Han-tan in Chao, he set himself up as king of Chao, making Ch'en Yü his commanding general and Chang Erh and Shao Sao his prime ministers of the left and right. Ch'en She was enraged at this and seized and bound the members of their families, preparing to execute them. But the chief minister, Ts'ai Tz'u, interceded, saying, "Ch'in, our great enemy, has not yet been destroyed. Now if you execute the families of the king of Chao and his ministers,

[7] The heartland of Ch'in, with its capital, Hsien-yang, lay in the northwest, surrounded by rivers and mountains, the so-called land within the Passes. The two principal approaches to it were through the Wu Pass in the south and the Han-ku Pass in the east. Unless otherwise stated, "the Pass" refers to the latter.

[8] Where they had been assembled to work on the great mausoleum of the First Emperor of Ch'in.

you will only create a second Ch'in to plague us. It would be better to comply with what Wu Ch'en and the others have done and confirm their positions."

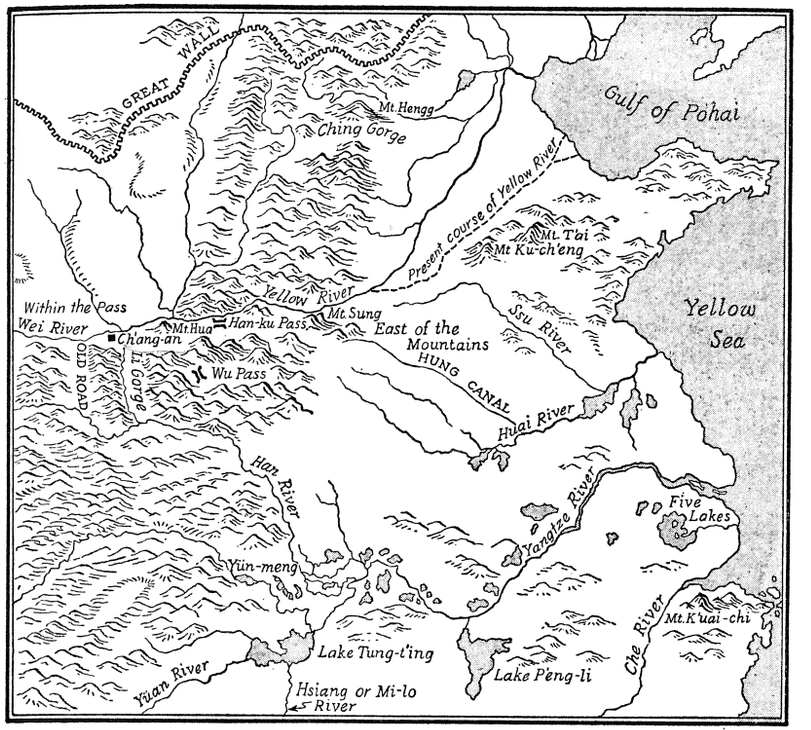
Ch'en She accordingly dispatched an envoy to congratulate Wu Ch'en on his new position as king of Chao, but the families of Wu Ch'en and the others he had transferred to his own palace and kept under guard. Chang Erh's son, Chang Ao, he enfeoffed as lord of Ch'eng-tu.

Ch'en She urged the troops of Chao to proceed with all haste to the area within the Pass, but Chao's generals and ministers plotted with their king, saying, "It was not Ch'en She's intention that you should become king of Chao. When he has finished conquering Ch'in, he will assuredly turn his forces against us. The best plan, therefore, would be for us not to dispatch troops west, but instead to send a force north to seize the region of Yen and broaden the territory under your command. With the Yellow River to protect Chao in the south, and Yen and Tai to the north in our possession, Ch'en She in Ch'u will not dare try to impose his will upon us, even if he is victorious over Ch'in. And if Ch'en She should fail to conquer Ch'in, he will be forced to rely more heavily than ever upon us. At that point we can take advantage of the damage already inflicted upon Ch'in by Ch'en She and have our way with the whole empire!"

The king of Chao approved their suggestion and sent no troops west, but instead dispatched Han Kuang, a former troop commander of the province of Shang-ku, to lead an army north and seize the region of Yen.

The former nobles and leaders of Yen addressed Han Kuang, saying, "Ch'u has already set up a king, and so has Chao. Although Yen is rather small, it still deserves to be called, as the old phrase has it, 'a kingdom of a myriad chariots.' We would like therefore to make you king of Yen."

Han Kuang, however, objected. "My mother is still in Chao," he said. "I am afraid it would not do!" But the men of Yen replied, "Chao at the present time has all it can do to worry about Ch'in in the west and Ch'u to the south. It has no strength left to interfere with what we do. Ch'en She, in spite of all his power, did not dare to harm the



THE TOPOGRAPHY OF HAN CHINA

families of the king and ministers of Chao. How should Chao dare to do any harm to your family?"

Han Kuang, considering that what they said was true, declared himself king of Yen. After a few months Chao with all due respect sent his mother and the rest of his family to him in Yen.

By this time there were any number of leaders of the revolt attempting to win control of different regions of the empire. Chou Shih raided the north as far as Ti in Ch'i. T'ien Tan, a native of Ti, murdered the magistrate of the district of Ti and declared himself king of Ch'i. He then proceeded to lead the forces of Ch'i in an attack on Chou Shih. Chou Shih's army scattered before him, turned back, and retreated to the region of Wei. Chou Shih wanted to set up Wei Chiu, the former lord of Ning-ling, who was a descendant of the royal family of Wei, as king of Wei, but Chiu was at the time with Ch'en She and so was not able to come to Wei. After Chou Shih's men had conquered the region of Wei, they wanted to join the people of Wei in setting up Chou Shih himself as king, but Chou Shih refused to consent. Five times envoys were sent back and forth between Wei and Ch'en She in an attempt to reach a solution, until finally Ch'en She agreed to make Chiu the king of Wei, and sent him to his new kingdom. Chou Shih in the end became his prime minister.

T'ien Tsang, one of Ch'en She's generals, plotted with his fellow officers, saying, "Since Chou Wen's army has been defeated, Ch'in's soldiers day and night draw nearer. Now we have encircled the city of Jung-yang, but we have been unable to take it. When the armies of Ch'in reach us we are sure to suffer a great defeat. It would be better to leave a small number of troops behind, sufficient to keep watch on Jung-yang, and lead our best men west to meet the Ch'in armies. Our leader, Wu Kuang, who has been made an acting king, is too arrogant and knows nothing of military tactics. He is not worth consulting with on matters of strategy. If we do not do away with him our whole undertaking will be in danger of collapse!" Accordingly they joined in forging orders from Ch'en She and proceeded to execute Wu Kuang and send his head to Ch'en She. Ch'en She in turn sent an envoy to reward T'ien Tsang with the official seals of prime minister of Ch'u, making him commanding general.

T'ien Tsang then ordered Li Kuei and some of his other generals to guard the city of Jung-yang, while he himself led his best troops west to meet the army of Ch'in at the Ao Granary and join in battle. T'ien Tsang was killed and his army defeated. The Ch'in commander Chang Han advanced with his troops and attacked Li Kuei and the others before the walls of Jung-yang, defeating and killing them.

A man of Yang-ch'eng named Teng Yüeh was at this time in charge of a force of men in T'an. Chang Han dispatched an expeditionary force to attack and crush him, whereupon Teng Yüeh's army scattered and fled to Ch'en. Wu Hsü, a man of Chih, held command of a force at Hsü, but when attacked by Chang Han his army, too, scattered and fled to Ch'en. Ch'en She executed Teng Yüeh.

At the time when Ch'en She first set himself up as a king a group of men, including Ch'in Chia of Ling, Tung Hsieh of Chih, Chu Chi-shih of Fu-li, Cheng Pu of Ch'ü-lu, and Ting Chi, started an uprising of their own, leading a band of troops to surround Ch'ing, the magistrate of Tung-hai, at T'an. When Ch'en She received word of this he dispatched P'an, the lord of Wu-p'ing, to act as their commander and take charge of their forces, which were camped outside the walls of T'an. Ch'in Chia, however, declined to accept these orders, but instead declared himself a grand marshal and refused to put himself under the lord of Wu-p'ing's command. "The lord of Wu-p'ing is too young and knows nothing of military affairs," he advised his officers. "Do not listen to what he says!" Accordingly they forged an order from Ch'en She and executed the lord of Wu-p'ing.

After Chang Han had defeated Wu Hsü he marched to attack the city of Ch'en, killing Ts'ai Tz'u, the chief minister. He then advanced and attacked the army of Chang Chia west of Ch'en. Ch'en She came out to observe the battle, but the army was defeated and Chang Chia killed. In the twelfth month, at the time of the winter sacrifice, Ch'en She journeyed to Ju-yin and from there withdrew to Hsia-ch'eng-fu, where he was murdered by his carriage driver, Chuang Chia, who declared Ch'en loyal to the Ch'in government. Ch'en She was buried at Tang with the posthumous title of "The Melancholy King."

General Lü Ch'en, former master of purification under Ch'en She,

formed a band of men known as the Blue Heads and started an uprising in Hsin-yang. They attacked and conquered the city of Ch'en, killed Chuang Chia, and declared Ch'en loyal to Ch'u once more.

When Ch'en She first marched on Ch'en he dispatched Sung Liu, a man of Chih, with orders to lead a force of troops west to conquer the region of Nan-yang and enter the Wu Pass. Sung Liu had already gained control of Nan-yang, but when news of Ch'en She's death spread abroad, Nan-yang declared itself loyal again to Ch'in. Sung Liu was therefore unable to enter the Wu Pass, but instead marched back east as far as Hsin-ts'ai, where he encountered the Ch'in army and surrendered to it. The Ch'in government had him brought back to the capital by relay carriage, where he was tied to two carts and torn apart to serve as a warning to the populace.

When Ch'in Chia and his band heard that Ch'en She's army had been defeated and was in flight they set up Ching Chü as king of Ch'u and led their troops to Fang-yü, planning to attack the Ch'in army outside the walls of Ting-t'ao. In the meantime they dispatched Kung-sun Ch'ing as their envoy to T'ien Tan, the king of Ch'i, requesting that Ch'i join with them in the attack.

"Though word has come that Ch'en She has been defeated, no one knows whether he is still alive or not," said the king of Ch'i. "What do you mean by setting up a new king of Ch'u without consulting me?"

"You did not consult Ch'u when you set yourself up as king of Ch'i," responded Kung-sun Ch'ing. "Why should Ch'u consult Ch'i when it sets up its own king? Ch'u is the leader of the uprising. It is only proper that she should give orders to the rest of the empire!" The king of Ch'i executed Kung-sun Ch'ing.

Ch'in's colonels of the left and right again attacked Ch'en and recaptured it. Lü Ch'en's army fled, but soon recruited more men and reformed. Ch'ing Pu, the lord of Tang-yang, a bandit leader of P'o, recruited a force of men and joined Lü Ch'en in another attack on the colonels of Ch'in, defeating them at Ch'ing-p'o. With this, the city of Ch'en once more became an ally of Ch'u. It was at this time that Hsiang Liang set up Hsin, the grandson of the former King Huai, as the new king of Ch'u.

All in all, Ch'en She was a king for six months. When he had become king and was ruling the region of Ch'en, one of his old friends who had once worked as a hired hand with him in the fields heard of his success and went and knocked upon the palace gate of Ch'en, saying, "I want to see She!" The gatekeeper was about to order him arrested, but he managed to convince the keeper that he was an old friend of Ch'en She. The gatekeeper let him go, but refused to allow him to enter the palace.

When the king emerged from the palace, the man stood by the roadside and shouted "She!" Hearing his voice, Ch'en She ordered that he be brought forward and, inviting him to ride in his carriage, returned with him to the palace. When the man entered the palace and saw all its great halls with their curtains and trappings he said, "Oh, a heap of stuff you have, She, now you're a king! Such a big place!" (The people of Ch'u say "a heap" when they mean a lot.) Eventually the story spread all over the empire, so that from this incident with Ch'en She originated the saying "Even 'heap-of-She' got to be king."

After this the old friend came often to visit Ch'en She, making himself more and more at home in the palace and telling people about Ch'en She's life in the old days. Someone warned Ch'en She about this, saying, "This guest of yours is ignorant and ill-bred, and his idle chatter serves only to degrade your dignity!" Ch'en She had his old friend's head cut off. Thereafter all of Ch'en She's former acquaintances withdrew of their own accord, and no one attempted to be on intimate terms with him.

Ch'en She appointed Chu Fang as rectifier and Hu Wu as director of faults, putting them in charge of his other ministers and officials. When any of the various generals returned from expeditions to seize territory, if it appeared that they had not carried out their orders exactly, these two officials bound them like criminals and subjected them to the severest examination to determine their loyalty. If any fault was found in their behavior, their case was not submitted to the lesser officials for trial, but was settled summarily by Chu Fang and Hu Wu themselves. Ch'en She entrusted everything to these two men with the fullest confidence, and for this reason his generals felt no personal attachment to him. This is why he failed.

Although Ch'en She himself died very early, the various rulers and

commanders whom he set up and dispatched on expeditions eventually succeeded in overthrowing the Ch'in. Thus it was he who actually began the uprising. In the time of Emperor Kao-tsu of the Han, thirty families were established to take care of Ch'en She's grave at Tang, so that down to the present day he has continued to enjoy the blood and flesh of sacrifices.[9]

It is by the lay of the land and its strategic fastnesses that one's position is made secure, and by the force of arms and law that one executes his rule. And yet these alone cannot be relied upon. The kings of antiquity made humanity and righteousness the root of their rule, and considered strategic power, laws, and regulations as no more than its branches. Was this not a just view? Chia I, discussing the history of the Ch'in dynasty, has written as follows:

Duke Hsiao of Ch'in [fourth century B.C.], relying upon the strength of the Han-ku Pass and basing himself in the area of Yung-chou, with his ministers held fast to his land and eyed the house of Chou, for he cherished a desire to roll up the empire like a mat, to bind into one the whole world, to bag all the land within the four seas; he had it in his heart to swallow up everything in the eight directions. At this time he was aided by the Legalist philosopher Lord Shang, who set up laws for him, encouraged agriculture and weaving, built up the instruments of war, contracted military alliances, and attacked the other feudal lords. Thus the men of Ch'in were able with ease to acquire territory east of the upper reaches of the Yellow River.

After the death of Duke Hsiao, Kings Hui-wen, Wu, and Chao carried on the undertakings of their predecessor and, following the plans he had laid, seized Han-chung in the south and Pa and Shu in the west, and acquired rich land in the east and provinces of strategic value. The other feudal lords in alarm came together in council to devise some plan to weaken Ch'in, sparing nothing in gifts of precious objects and rich lands to induce men from all over the empire to come and join with them in a "vertical alliance,"

[9] This chapter lacks the customary closing remarks of the Grand Historian. The section which follows in present texts is introduced by the words "Master Ch'u remarks." Master Ch'u, or Ch'u Shao-sun, was a scholar who, some time after Ssu-ma Ch'ien's death, took it upon himself to make additions to the historian's work. However it is quite possible that this closing section, with its long quotation from the poet Chia I's famous essay "The Faults of Ch'in," describing the rise and fall of the Ch'in empire, was actually added by Ssu-ma Ch'ien himself, since in other chapters he quotes from the same essay or other works of Chia I.

and pool their strength. At this time there were Lord Meng-ch'ang in Ch'i, Lord P'ing-yüan in Chao, Lord Ch'un-shen in Ch'u, and Lord Hsin-ling in Wei. These four lords were all men of intelligence and loyalty, generous and kind to others, who honored worthy men and took good care of their followers. They rejected the Horizontal Alliance and instead formed the Vertical Alliance, which united all the forces of the states of Hann,[10] Wei, Yen, Ch'u, Ch'i, Chao, Sung, Wei, and Chung-shan. At this time among the distinguished men of the Six States were men like Ning Yüeh, Hsü Shang, Su Ch'in, and She Ho, who laid the plans; Ch'i Ming, Chou Chü, Ch'en Chen, Shao Hua, Lou Huan, Ti Ching, Su Li, Yüeh I, and their followers, who carried out these plans; and Wu Ch'i, Sun Pin, Tai T'o, Erh Liang, Wang Liao, T'ien Chi, Lien P'o, and Chao She, who commanded the troops. With a force of a million soldiers drawn from an area ten times that of Ch'in they beat upon the Pass and pressed forward toward Ch'in. But the men of Ch'in opened the Pass and went out to meet the enemy, and the armies of the Nine States fled and did not dare to advance. Ch'in, without expending a single arrow or losing a single arrowhead, threatened the fate of the whole empire.

With this, the Vertical Alliance collapsed, its treaties came to naught, and the various states hastened to present Ch'in with parts of their territories as bribes for peace. With its superior strength Ch'in pressed the crumbling forces of its rivals, pursued those who had fled in defeat, and overwhelmed and slaughtered the army of a million until their shields floated upon a river of blood. Following up the advantages of its victory, Ch'in gained mastery over the empire and divided up its mountains and rivers. The powerful states begged to submit to its sovereignty and the weaker ones paid homage at its court.

Then followed Kings Hsiao-wen and Chuang-hsiang, whose reigns were short and uneventful. After this came the First Emperor who, carrying on the glorious spirit of his six predecessors, cracked his long whip and drove the universe before him, swallowed up the eastern and western Chou, and overthrew the feudal lords. He ascended the throne of honor and ruled the six directions, scourging the world with his rod, and his might shook the four seas. In the south he seized the land of the hundred tribes of Yüeh and made of it Kuei-lin and Hsiang provinces, and the lords of the hundred Yüeh bowed their heads, hung halters from their necks, and pleaded for their lives with the lowest officials of Ch'in. Then he sent Meng T'ien to

[10] A state in north-central China, just south of the Yellow River. I have romanized it with two *n*'s throughout to distinguish it from the other state of Han, in the west, which gave its name to the Han dynasty.

build the Great Wall and defend the borders, driving back the Hsiung-nu over seven hundred *li*,[11] so that the barbarians no longer ventured to come south to pasture their horses and their men dared not take up their bows to vent their hatred.

Thereupon he discarded the ways of the former kings and burned the books of the hundred schools of philosophy in order to make the people ignorant. He destroyed the walls of the great cities, assassinated the powerful leaders, and collected all the arms of the empire, which he had brought to his capital at Hsien-yang, where the spears and arrowheads were melted down and cast to make twelve human statues. All this he did in order to weaken the people of the empire. After this he ascended and fortified Mount Hua, set up fords along the Yellow River, and strengthened the heights and precipices overlooking the fathomless valleys, in order to secure his position. He garrisoned the strategic points with skilled generals and strong crossbowmen and stationed trusted ministers and well-trained soldiers to guard the land with arms and question all who passed back and forth. When he had thus pacified the empire, the First Emperor believed in his heart that, with the strength of his capital within the Pass and his walls of metal extending a thousand miles, he had established a rule that would be enjoyed by his sons and grandsons for ten thousand generations.

For a while after the death of the First Emperor the memory of his might continued to awe the common people. Yet Ch'en She, born in a humble hut with tiny windows and a wattle door, a day laborer in the fields and a garrison conscript, whose abilities could not match even the average, who had neither the worth of Confucius and Mo Tzu nor the wealth of T'ao Chu or I Tun, stepped from the ranks of the common soldiers, rose up from the paths of the fields, and led a band of some hundred poor, weary soldiers in revolt against Ch'in. They cut down trees to make their weapons and raised their flags on garden poles, and the whole world gathered like a cloud, answered like an echo to a sound, brought them provisions, and followed after them as shadows follow a form. In the end the leaders east of the mountains rose up together and destroyed the house of Ch'in.

Now the empire of Ch'in at this time was by no means small or feeble. Its base in Yung-chou, its stronghold within the Pass, were the same as before. The position of Ch'en She could not compare in dignity with the lords of Ch'i, Ch'u, Yen, Chao, Hann, Wei, Sung, Wei,[12] and Chung-shan. The

[11] The nomadic people who occupied the area north of China. They are often identified with the Huns. The Chinese *li* is about one third of an English mile.

[12] There were two states named Wei.

weapons which he improvised from hoes and tree branches could not match the sharpness of spears and battle pikes; his little band of garrison conscripts was nothing beside the armies of the Nine States. In deep plotting and far-reaching stratagems, in methods of warfare, he was far inferior to the men of earlier times. And yet Ch'en She succeeded in his undertaking where they had failed, though in ability, size, power, and strength his forces could in no way compare to those of the states east of the mountains that had formerly opposed Ch'in. Ch'in, beginning with an insignificant amount of territory, reached the power of a great kingdom and for a hundred years made the ancient eight provinces pay homage at its court. Yet, after it had become master of the six directions and established its palaces within the Pass, a single commoner opposed it and its seven ancestral temples toppled, its ruler died by the hands of men, and it became the laughing stock of the world. Why? Because it failed to rule with humanity and righteousness, and did not realize that the power to attack and the power to retain what one has thereby won are not the same.[13]

[13] Other texts of this famous essay, appearing in *Shih chi* 6, *Hsin shu* 1, *Wen hsüan* 51, and elsewhere, have been consulted and occasional variant readings adopted.

Part II

THE VANQUISHED

Shih chi 7: The Basic Annals of Hsiang Yü

Ch'in failed in goodness and the great leaders rose to vex it. Hsiang Liang began the task and his nephew, Yü, carried it on. When the latter killed Sung I and rescued Chao, the feudal leaders made him their ruler; but when he executed Tzu-ying and rebelled against King Huai, the world joined in censuring him. Thus I made The Basic Annals of Hsiang Yü.

Hsiang Chi, whose polite name was Yü, was a native of Hsia-hsiang. He was twenty-four when he first took up arms. His father's youngest brother was Hsiang Liang. Hsiang Liang's father, Hsiang Yen, was a general of Ch'u who was driven to suicide by the Ch'in general Wang Chien. The Hsiang family for generations were generals of Ch'u and were enfeoffed in Hsiang; hence they took the family name Hsiang.

When Hsiang Yü was a boy he studied the art of writing. Failing to master this, he abandoned it and took up swordsmanship. When he failed at this also, his uncle, Hsiang Liang, grew angry with him, but Hsiang Yü declared, "Writing is good only for keeping records of people's names. Swordsmanship is useful only for attacking a single enemy and is likewise not worth studying. What I want to learn is the art of attacking ten thousand enemies!" With this, Hsiang Liang began to teach his nephew the art of warfare, which pleased Yü greatly. On the whole Yü understood the essentials of the art, but here again he was unwilling to pursue the study in detail.

Hsiang Liang was once implicated in some crime in Yüeh-yang but, obtaining a letter on his behalf from the prison warden of Chi, Ts'ao Chiu, he presented it to Ssu-ma Hsin, the prison warden of Yüeh-yang, and was released from the charge.

Later Hsiang Liang killed a man and, with Hsiang Yü, fled to the region of Wu to escape the vengeance of the man's family. All the worthy and renowned men of the region of Wu acknowledged Hsiang Liang as their superior and, whenever there was some major govern-

ment construction work or a funeral in the area, Hsiang Liang was put in charge of the proceedings. In secret he formed a band of guests and retainers and trained them in the art of war so that he came to know the abilities of each.

Once the First Emperor of Ch'in came on a visit to K'uai-chi. When he was crossing the Che River, Hsiang Liang and Hsiang Yü went to watch the procession. "This fellow could be deposed and replaced!" Hsiang Yü remarked. Hsiang Liang clapped his hand over his nephew's mouth. "Don't speak such nonsense," he cautioned, "or we and all our family will be executed!" After this incident Hsiang Liang treated his nephew with peculiar respect.

Hsiang Yü was over eight feet tall[1] and so strong that with his two hands he could lift a bronze cauldron. In ability and spirit he far surpassed others, so that all the young men of the region of Wu were afraid of him.

In the first year of the Second Emperor of Ch'in [209 B.C.], during the seventh month, Ch'en She and his band began their uprising in the region of Ta-tse. In the ninth month T'ung, the governor of K'uai-chi, announced to Hsiang Liang, "All the region west of the Yangtze is in revolt. The time has come when Heaven will destroy the house of Ch'in. I have heard it said that he who takes the lead may rule others, but he who lags behind will be ruled by others. I would like to dispatch an army with you and Huan Ch'u at the head." (Huan Ch'u was at this time in hiding in the swamps.)

Hsiang Liang replied, "Huan Ch'u is in hiding and no one knows where he is. Only Hsiang Yü knows the place." Hsiang Liang left the room and went to give instructions to Hsiang Yü, telling him to hold his sword in readiness and wait outside. Then he returned and sat down again with the governor. "I beg leave to call in my nephew Yü, so that he may receive your order to summon Huan Ch'u," said Hsiang Liang. The governor consented, and Hsiang Liang sent for Hsiang Yü to come in. After some time, Hsiang Liang winked at his nephew and said, "You may proceed!" With this, Hsiang Yü drew his sword and cut off the governor's head. Hsiang Liang picked up the governor's head and hung the seals of office from his own belt. The governor's

[1] I.e., over six feet. The Han foot is about three fourths of our foot.

office was thrown into utter panic and confusion. After Hsiang Yü had attacked and killed several dozen attendants the entire staff submitted in terror, not a man daring to offer resistance.

Hsiang Liang then summoned a number of high officials whom he had known in the past and informed them of his reasons for starting a revolt. He called out all the troops of the region of Wu, sending men to recruit them from the various districts under his jurisdiction, until he had obtained a force of eight thousand picked men, and he assigned various distinguished and powerful men of Wu as his commanders, lieutenants, and marshals. One man, to whom no post had been assigned, went to Hsiang Liang and asked the reason. "In the past," replied Hsiang Liang, "at the time of So-and-so's funeral, I put you in charge of certain affairs, but you were unable to handle them properly. For this reason I have not assigned you a post." After this everyone accepted his assignments without argument. Hsiang Liang became governor of K'uai-chi and Hsiang Yü was made lieutenant general with the task of subduing the districts under the governor's jurisdiction.

Chao P'ing, a man of Kuang-ling, had been sent by Ch'en She to seize the district of Kuang-ling, but the district had not yet submitted. When Chao P'ing heard that Ch'en She had been defeated and fled and that the Ch'in forces were on their way, he crossed the Yangtze and, pretending that he was acting on orders from Ch'en She, conferred on Hsiang Liang the title of chief minister to the king of Ch'u. "Now that this region east of the Yangtze is under control," he said, "you must with all speed lead your troops west and attack Ch'in!"

Hsiang Liang took his eight thousand men, crossed the Yangtze, and proceeded west. When he heard that Ch'en Ying had already conquered Tung-yang he sent an envoy suggesting that the two of them join forces and proceed west together. Ch'en Ying had formerly been secretary to the district magistrate of Tung-yang. He was unfailingly honest and circumspect in all his duties in the district and was known as a man of exceptional worth. Some of the young men of Tung-yang had murdered the district magistrate and, gathering together a force of several thousand men, were looking for a leader. Failing to find anyone suitable, they asked Ch'en Ying. He refused, saying that he was unsuited for the job, but they finally forced him to become their leader.

When they had gathered a force of twenty thousand men from the district they decided to make Ch'en Ying a king, mark their forces off from the other rebel groups by wearing blue caps, and start their own uprising.

Ch'en Ying's mother advised him, saying, "From the time I first came into your household as a bride I have never heard of any of your ancestors who were noblemen. Now if you should suddenly acquire a great title, I fear it would bring ill luck. It would be better for you to place yourself under the command of someone else. If the undertaking is successful, you will still be made a marquis. And should the undertaking fail, it will be easy for you to go into hiding, for the world will not point you out by name."

As a result Ch'en Ying did not venture to become a king. Instead he told the leaders of his army, "The Hsiang family have for generations been generals, and are well known in Ch'u. If we wish now to begin a revolt, it is imperative that we have one of them as our general. If we put our trust in a family of such renown, there is no doubt that Ch'in can be destroyed." All agreed to follow his advice and put their troops under Hsiang Liang's command. When Hsiang Liang crossed the Huai River, both Ch'ing Pu and General P'u, as well, placed their troops under his command. In all he had a force of sixty or seventy thousand men, which he encamped at Hsia-p'ei.

At this time Ch'in Chia had already set up Ching Chü as king of Ch'u and was himself camped east of P'eng-ch'eng, intending to block Hsiang Liang's advance. Hsiang Liang addressed his officers, saying "Ch'en She, king of Ch'u, was formerly the leader of the uprising, but he was unsuccessful in battle and we do not know at present where he is. Now Ch'in Chia, acting in defiance of Ch'en She, has set up Ching Chü as king. This is a most outrageous act of treason!" Then he led his troops to attack Ch'in Chia, who fled in defeat. Hsiang Liang pursued him as far as Hu-ling, where Ch'in Chia turned and engaged in battle. At the end of the day Ch'in Chia was dead and his army had surrendered. Ching Chü fled to the region of Liang, where he died. Hsiang Liang then joined Ch'in Chia's army to his own and camped at Hu-ling, preparing to march west.

At this time the Ch'in army led by Chang Han had reached Li.

Hsiang Liang sent Chu Chi-shih and Yü Fan-chün as special generals to attack him there, but Yü Fan-chün was killed in battle and the army of Chu Chi-shih, defeated, fled back to Hu-ling. Hsiang Liang then led his forces into Hsieh and executed Chu Chi-shih.

Earlier, Hsiang Liang had sent Hsiang Yü with a special force to attack the city of Hsiang-ch'eng, but the city was strongly defended and would not submit. When he at last succeeded in capturing it Hsiang Yü had all the defenders butchered. He then returned and reported to Hsiang Liang. When Hsiang Liang received definite news that Ch'en She was dead he summoned all his various generals to a meeting at Hsieh to plan his next move. At this time Liu Chi, the governor of P'ei, who had also begun an uprising in P'ei, attended the meeting.

Also present was Fan Tseng of Chü-ch'ao, a man of seventy who lived in retirement and took no part in public affairs. He was very fond of peculiar plans and stratagems, and counseled Hsiang Liang, saying, "It is altogether natural and proper that Ch'en She should have met with defeat. Among all the six great kingdoms which Ch'in destroyed Ch'u was least deserving of its fate. Ever since the time when King Huai of Ch'u went to visit Ch'in and failed to return to his own land the people of Ch'u have never ceased to grieve. Therefore Master Nan, the seer of Ch'u, has said: 'Though but three houses be left in Ch'u, it is she who will destroy Ch'in!' When Ch'en She was head of the uprising he did not set up the heir to the royal house of Ch'u, but made himself king instead, and thus his power quickly waned. Now, since you have risen east of the Yangtze, the leaders of Ch'u swarm forth like bees, vying with one another to place themselves at your disposal. This is because the men of your family have for generations been generals of Ch'u and you have it in your power to reestablish the royal line of Ch'u."

Hsiang Liang, acknowledging the truth of his words, sought out Hsin, the grandson of the late King Huai of Ch'u, who was living among the common people, herding sheep in the hire of another man, and set him up as King Huai of Ch'u in accordance with the wishes of the people. Ch'en Ying he made prime minister of Ch'u, with a fief of five districts, and sent him with King Huai to establish

the capital at Hsü-i. Hsiang Liang himself took the title of lord of Wu-hsin.

After several months he led his troops to attack K'ang-fu. Joining with the armies of T'ien Jung of Ch'i and Marshal Lung Ch'ieh, he went to the rescue of Tung-a, which was besieged by Ch'in, and there inflicted a major defeat upon the Ch'in army. T'ien Jung led his troops back to Ch'i and deposed T'ien Chia, the king of Ch'i. T'ien Chia fled to Ch'u and his prime minister, T'ien Chüeh, fled to Chao, where his younger brother, T'ien Chien, a former general of Ch'i, was living, afraid to return to Ch'i. T'ien Jung set up Shih, the son of T'ien Tan, as king of Ch'i. Hsiang Liang, having already defeated the army at Tung-a, was in pursuit of the Ch'in forces, and several times sent envoys to urge the forces of Ch'i to join him in proceeding west. T'ien Jung announced: "If Ch'u will kill T'ien Chia and Chao will kill T'ien Chüeh and T'ien Chien, then I will dispatch my troops." Hsiang Liang replied, "T'ien Chia is the king of an allied state. He has come to me in distress and placed himself under my care. I cannot bring myself to kill him." Chao likewise declared that it would not kill T'ien Chüeh and T'ien Chien for the sake of buying favor with Ch'i. As a result, Ch'i was unwilling to dispatch troops to aid Ch'u.

Hsiang Liang sent the governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü with a special force to attack the city of Ch'eng-yang and massacre its inhabitants. After accomplishing this they proceeded west and defeated the Ch'in forces east of P'u-yang. When the Ch'in forces withdrew to cover in P'u-yang the governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü attacked Ting-t'ao. Failing to capture Ting-t'ao, they withdrew and seized the land to the west until they reached Yung-ch'iu, where they inflicted a major defeat on the Ch'in forces and decapitated Li Yu. Then they turned back and attacked Wai-huang. Before Wai-huang had submitted, Hsiang Liang marched out of Tung-a and proceeded west until he reached Ting-t'ao, where he inflicted a second defeat upon the Ch'in army.

Because of this, and because Hsiang Yü and his men in the meantime had succeeded in decapitating Li Yu, Hsiang Liang became increasingly contemptuous of the Ch'in forces and began to grow proud and overbearing. Sung I warned him, saying "If, because of victory in battle, a general becomes proud and his soldiers unwary, defeat is sure

to follow. Now your soldiers have begun to grow rather lazy, while the Ch'in forces increase day by day. I am afraid of what may happen to you!" Hsiang Liang, however, refused to listen to Sung I's counsel, but dispatched him as his envoy to Ch'i. On the way there, Sung I happened to meet the envoy from Ch'i, Hsien, the lord of Kao-ling. "Are you on your way to see Hsiang Liang, the lord of Wu-ling?" he inquired, to which the other replied "I am." "I can tell you," said Sung I, "that the lord of Wu-ling is sure to meet with defeat. If you proceed on your way slowly enough, you may escape death. But if you hurry you will only encounter misfortune!"

As Sung I had foreseen, Ch'in gathered together all its forces and sent them to aid Chang Han, who attacked the Ch'u army at Ting-t'ao, inflicted a decisive defeat, and killed Hsiang Liang.

The governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü withdrew from Wai-huang and attacked Ch'en-liu, but Ch'en-liu was stoutly defended and they could not conquer it. They discussed what their best plan would be and decided that, since Hsiang Liang's army had been defeated and their soldiers were filled with terror, they had better join with the army of Lü Ch'en and withdraw to the east. Accordingly they retreated, and Lü Ch'en camped east of P'eng-ch'eng, Hsiang Yü west of P'eng-ch'eng, and the governor of P'ei at Tang.

Chang Han, the Ch'in commander, having defeated Hsiang Liang's army, considered that the forces of the Ch'u area were no longer worth worrying about. Therefore he crossed the Yellow River and attacked Chao, inflicting a severe defeat. At this time Chao Hsieh was king of Chao, Ch'en Yü was in command of the army, and Chang Erh was prime minister. All fled and took refuge within the walls of Chü-lu. Chang Han ordered Wang Li and She Chien to encircle the city, while he himself camped to the south and constructed a walled road along which to transport supplies of grain. Ch'en Yü, the Chao general, with a force of some twenty or thirty thousand men, camped north of Chü-lu. This was the so-called Army North of the River.

With the forces of Ch'u already defeated at Ting-t'ao, King Huai grew fearful and moved from Hsü-i to P'eng-ch'eng, where he combined the armies of Hsiang Yü and Lü Ch'en and himself took command. He appointed Lü Ch'en as minister of instruction and his

father, Lü Ch'ing, as prime minister. The governor of P'ei he made head of Tang Province, enfeoffed him as marquis of Wu-an, and put him in command of the troops of Tang.

Hsien, the lord of Kao-ling, the envoy from Ch'i whom Sung I had formerly chanced to meet on his way, was at this time with the Ch'u army, and went to see the king of Ch'u. "Sung I," he said, "warned me that Hsiang Liang would surely meet defeat, and after a few days he was in fact defeated. He who can read the signs of defeat before the armies have even engaged in battle may indeed be said to understand the art of warfare." The king thereupon summoned Sung I and discussed affairs of strategy with him. He was delighted with Sung I and made him supreme general of the army. Hsiang Yü, with the title of "Duke of Lu," he made second general, and Tseng Fan third general, and sent them to relieve Chao. All of the other special commanders were placed under the command of Sung I, who was given the title of "His Lordship, the Commander of the Armies."

The armies advanced as far as An-yang, where they halted for forty-six days without proceeding further. Hsiang Yü conferred with Sung I, saying, "News has come that the Ch'in army has besieged the king of Chao at Chü-lu. If we lead our troops across the Yellow River at once, we can attack them with our forces from outside, Chao will respond by attacking from the city, and we are sure to defeat the Ch'in army."

"Not so," replied Sung I. "He who merely slaps at the gadfly on the cow's back will never succeed in killing the pesky lice.[2] Ch'in is now attacking Chao. If she is victorious in battle, then her troops will be weary and we can take advantage of their weakness. And if she is defeated, then we may lead our forces openly and without fear to the west, assured of victory over Ch'in. Therefore it is better for us to let Ch'in and Chao fight it out first. In buckling on armor and wielding a weapon I may be no match for you, but in sitting down and working out problems of strategy you are no match for me!" After this Sung I circulated an order throughout the army reading: "Fierce as a tiger, recalcitrant as a ram, greedy as a wolf, so headstrong they will not

[2] I.e., the Ch'in forces, deployed in small groups all over the empire, cannot be defeated by a single local victory, no matter how spectacular.

submit to orders—if there are any such men, let them all be decapitated."[3]

Sung I dispatched his son, Sung Hsiang, to be prime minister of Ch'i, accompanying him along the way as far as Wu-yen, where he held a great drinking party. The day was cold, a heavy rain was falling, and the soldiers were chilled and starving.

"We joined forces for the purpose of attacking Ch'in," Hsiang Yü declared, "but instead we have sat here all this time without advancing. The year is lean, the people are poor, and our men eat nothing but taro root and pulse. We have no provisions for our army, and yet Sung I holds a great drinking party. He will not lead the troops across the river so that we may live off the food of Chao and join forces with Chao in attacking Ch'in, but instead tells us to 'take advantage of Ch'in's weakness.' Now if Ch'in in all her strength attacks the newly founded state of Chao, she is sure to be powerful enough to defeat Chao. And if Chao is defeated and Ch'in is left as strong as ever, what sort of weakness will there be for us to take advantage of? Our troops were only lately defeated and the king sits uneasy on his throne, yet all the men within our borders are swept up together under Sung I's sole command, so that the entire safety of our state depends upon this one move. Now he takes no thought for our soldiers, but attends only to his personal affairs. He is a traitor to the altars of our soil and grain!"

Early the next day Hsiang Yü went to make his morning report to the supreme general, Sung I, and, when he had entered the tent, he cut off Sung I's head. Then he went outside and issued an order to the army, saying: "Sung I was plotting with Ch'i against Ch'u. The king of Ch'u secretly ordered me to execute him." All the other generals submitted in fear, none daring to raise any objection. "It was General Hsiang's family who first set up the royal family of Ch'u," they declared, "and now the general has executed this traitor!" By mutual assent they set up Hsiang Yü as acting supreme general. Someone was sent to pursue Sung I's son and murder him when he reached Ch'i, while Huan Ch'u was dispatched to report what had happened to King Huai, who confirmed Hsiang Yü's title of supreme general. Ch'ing

[3] A hint that he would welcome the assassination of Hsiang Yü.

Pu, the lord of Tang-yang, and General P'u both placed their armies under Hsiang Yü's command.

Hsiang Yü had already killed "His Lordship, the Commander of the Armies"; his might now shook the whole land of Ch'u and his fame reached the ears of all the leaders of the other states. He then dispatched Ch'ing Pu and General P'u at the head of a force of twenty thousand soldiers to cross the Yellow River and bring aid to the city of Chü-lu, but they succeeded in winning only slight success. Ch'en Yü, the Chao commander, sent a request for more troops. With this Hsiang Yü led his entire force across the river. Once across, he sank all his boats, smashed the cooking pots and vessels, and set fire to his huts, taking with him only three days' rations, to make clear to his soldiers that they must fight to the death, for he had no intention of returning. This done, he proceeded to surround the Ch'in general Wang Li and engage his army. After nine battles he managed to cut the supply road and inflict a major defeat, killing the Ch'in general, Su Chüeh, and taking Wang Li prisoner. A third Ch'in general, She Chien, refused to surrender to Ch'u and burned himself to death.

At this time the troops of Ch'u took the lead before those of all the other states. The armies of ten or more of the other states who had come to aid Chü-lu were camped in fortifications outside the city, but none of them dared send forth their troops. When the Ch'u army arrived and set upon Ch'in the leaders of the other armies all stood upon the ramparts of their camps and watched. Of the fighting men of Ch'u there was none who was not a match for ten of the enemy; the war cry of Ch'u shook the heavens and the men of the other armies all trembled with fear.

After Hsiang Yü had defeated the Ch'in army he summoned the leaders of the armies of the other states to audience. Entering the "carriage gates,"[4] they all crawled forward on their knees and none dared look up. With this, Hsiang Yü for the first time became supreme commander of the leaders of the various states, and all of them were under his jurisdiction.

Chang Han's army was at this time camped at Chi-yüan and Hsiang Yü's army south of the Chang River, both holding their positions with-

[4] Formed by Ch'u's war chariots drawn up in array.

out engaging in battle. The Ch'in armies had several times been forced to retreat, and the Second Emperor sent an envoy to reprimand Chang Han for this. Chang Han grew fearful and dispatched his chief secretary, Ssu-ma Hsin, to plead on his behalf. When Ssu-ma Hsin reached the capital, he waited outside the palace gate for three days, but Chao Kao[5] refused to grant him audience on the grounds that he could not be trusted. Ssu-ma Hsin, filled with apprehension, hastened with all speed back to the army, not daring to take the road by which he had come. As he had feared, Chao Kao sent someone to pursue him, but the man failed to overtake him, and Ssu-ma Hsin succeeded in reaching the army and making his report: "Chao Kao is in complete control of the government and the officials under him can do nothing. If we manage to win victory now, Chao Kao is sure to be jealous of our merit, while if we are not victorious we will never escape the death penalty. I beg you to lay plans with the gravest care!"

Ch'en Yü, commander of the Chao forces, also sent a letter to Chang Han, stating:

Po Ch'i was once a general of Ch'in. In the south he conquered Yen and Ying; in the north he annihilated Ma-fu's army. Countless were the cities he attacked and the lands he seized, but at last he was condemned to death. Meng T'ien, too, was a general of Ch'in. In the north he drove out the barbarians and opened up thousands of miles of border land. But in the end his head was cut off at Yang-chou. Why was this? Because these men had won great merit and Ch'in could not reward them sufficiently with fiefs of land. So it invented some legal excuse to condemn and execute them instead.

Now you have been a general of Ch'in for three years, and while you have lost some hundred thousand troops, the leaders of the other states have risen up in ever increasing numbers. This man Chao Kao has for a long time flattered and deceived the Second Emperor, and now that affairs have reached a crisis he is afraid that the emperor will punish him. Therefore he hopes to use the law to punish you, in order to divert responsibility, and to send someone to take your place so that he may avoid disaster to himself.

You have been in the field for a long time, General, and you have many enemies at court. Regardless of whether you win glory or not, you are sure to be executed. The time has come when Heaven will destroy Ch'in and

[5] The eunuch who controlled the Second Emperor of the Ch'in and wielded the real power in the government.

every man, wise or foolish, knows it. Powerless to speak the truth openly to the court, camping in the fields as the leader of a doomed nation, would it not be pitiful if you were to try to drag out your days thus alone and friendless? Why do you not lead your troops and join with the other leaders of the Vertical Alliance? [6] We will take an oath to attack Ch'in together, divide up the land into kingdoms, face south [7] and call ourselves sovereigns. Would this not be better than bowing your body beneath the executioner's axe and seeing your wife and children slaughtered?

Chang Han was deeply perplexed and secretly sent his lieutenant Shih-ch'eng to Hsiang Yü, requesting an alliance. But before the alliance was concluded Hsiang Yü dispatched General P'u who, marching day and night, led his troops across the Chang River at the ford called Three Houses and camped south of the river, where he fought with the Ch'in army and defeated it again. Hsiang Yü then led all his troops in an attack upon the Ch'in army on the banks of the Yü River and inflicted a major defeat.

Chang Han again sent one of his men to see Hsiang Yü. Hsiang Yü summoned his officers into council and announced, "Our provisions are running low. I think we had better listen to his request for an alliance." When his officers all agreed Hsiang Yü set a date for a meeting with Chang Han at the site of the old capital of Yin south of the Yüan River. After the oaths of alliance had been concluded Chang Han came to Hsiang Yü, the tears streaming from his eyes, and informed him of Chao Kao's behavior. Hsiang Yü made Chang Han the king of Yung and quartered him with his own army. The chief secretary Ssu-ma Hsin he made supreme commander of the Ch'in armies with orders to lead them in an advance march as far as Hsin-an.

The officers and soldiers of the armies of the other states had in the past from time to time been sent to work on construction projects or on garrison duty and, when they had passed through the capital area of Ch'in, had often been ruthlessly treated by the officers and men of Ch'in. Now that the Ch'in army had surrendered to the other leaders they and their men took advantage of their victory to treat the Ch'in

[6] The alliance of states along the eastern coast who were traditionally opposed to Ch'in.

[7] The Chinese sovereign when he sits upon his throne faces south; hence, to "face south" means to become an independent ruler.

soldiers like slaves or prisoners and insult and abuse them with impunity. Many of the Ch'in officers and men whispered among themselves in secret, saying, "General Chang and the rest have tricked us into surrendering to the other leaders. Now if we succeed in entering the Pass and defeating Ch'in, all will be well. But if we are not successful, the other leaders will make prisoners of us and take us east with them, and Ch'in will most certainly execute all our parents and wives and children."

The generals of the army, hearing rumors of these plottings, reported them to Hsiang Yü, who summoned Ch'ing Pu and General P'u and announced to them this plan: "The officers and men of Ch'in are still very numerous, and in their hearts they have not surrendered. If, after we reach the land within the Pass, they should prove disloyal, we will be in a very dangerous situation. It would be better to attack and kill them, sparing only Chang Han, the chief secretary Ssu-ma Hsin, and Colonel Tung I to go with us to invade Ch'in." Accordingly the Ch'u army attacked by night and butchered over 200,000 soldiers of Ch'in south of the city of Hsin-an.

Then they proceeded on their way, overrunning and seizing control of the territory of Ch'in, until they reached the Han-ku Pass. But the Pass was guarded by soldiers, and they could not enter. When news came that the governor of P'ei had already conquered the capital city of Hsien-yang, Hsiang Yü was enraged, and sent Ch'ing Pu and others to attack the Pass. Hsiang Yü was finally able to enter, and proceeded as far as the west side of the Hsi River.

The governor of P'ei was camped at Pa-shang and had not yet had an opportunity to meet with Hsiang Yü. Ts'ao Wu-shang, marshal of the left to the governor of P'ei, sent a messenger to report to Hsiang Yü, saying, "The governor of P'ei is planning to become king of the area within the Pass, employ Tzu-ying [8] as his prime minister, and keep possession of all the precious articles and treasures of the capital." Hsiang Yü was in a rage. "Tomorrow," he announced, "I shall feast my soldiers and then we will attack and crush the governor of P'ei."

At this time Hsiang Yü had a force of 400,000 men encamped at Hung-men in Hsin-feng. The governor of P'ei, with a force of 100,000,

[8] The last ruler of Ch'in, who had already surrendered to the governor of P'ei.

was at Pa-shang. Fan Tseng counseled Hsiang Yü, saying, "When the governor of P'ei was living east of the mountains he was greedy for possessions and delighted in beautiful girls. But now that he has entered the Pass he has not taken a single thing, nor has he dallied with any of the wives or maidens. This proves that his mind is not set upon minor joys. I have sent men to observe the sky over the place where he is encamped, and they all found it full of shapes like dragons and tigers and colored with five colors. These are the signs of a Son of Heaven. You must attack him at once and not lose this chance!"

(l.10) Hsiang Po, the Ch'u commander of the left, was an uncle of Hsiang Yü and for a long time had been good friends with Chang Liang, the marquis of Liu. Chang Liang was at this time serving under the governor of P'ei. That night Hsiang Po galloped on horse to the camp of the governor of P'ei and visited Chang Liang in secret, telling him of Hsiang Yü's plans and begging Chang Liang to come away with him. "Do not throw your life away along with all the others!" he urged.

P.34 "I have been sent by the king of Hann to accompany the governor of P'ei," Chang Liang replied. "Now when he is faced with these difficulties, it would not be right for me to run away and leave him. I must report to him what you have told me."

Chang Liang then went and reported the situation in full to the governor of P'ei. "What shall we do?" exclaimed the governor in great consternation.

"Who was it who thought up this plan of action for you?" asked Chang Liang.

"Some fool advised me that if I guarded the Pass and did not let the other leaders enter, I could rule the entire region of Ch'in, and so I followed his plan," he replied.

"Do you believe that you have enough soldiers to stand up against Hsiang Yü?" Chang Liang asked.

The governor was silent for a while, and then said, "No, certainly not. But what should we do now?"

"You must let me go and explain to Hsiang Po," said Chang Liang, "and tell him that you would not dare to be disloyal to Hsiang Yü."

"How do you happen to be friends with Hsiang Po?" asked the governor.

"We knew each other in the time of Ch'in," replied Chang Liang, "and once when Hsiang Po killed a man I saved his life. Now that we are in trouble, he has for that reason been good enough to come and report to me."

"Is he older or younger than you?" asked the governor.

"He is older than I," replied Chang Liang.

"Call him in for me," said the governor, "and I will treat him as I would an elder brother."

(l.11) Chang Liang went out and urged Hsiang Po to enter. Hsiang Po came in to see the governor of P'ei, who offered him a cup of wine and drank to his long life, swearing an oath of friendship. "Since I entered the Pass," he said, "I have not dared to lay a finger on a single P.35 thing. I have preserved the registers of the officials and people and sealed up the storehouses, awaiting the arrival of General Hsiang Yü. The reason I sent officers to guard the Pass was to prevent thieves from getting in and to prepare for any emergency. Day and night I have looked forward to the arrival of the general. How would I dare be disloyal to him? I beg you to report to him in full and tell him that I would not think of turning my back upon his kindness!"

Hsiang Po agreed to do so, adding, "You must come early tomorrow and apologize in person to General Hsiang." "I shall," promised the (l.5) governor, and with this Hsiang Po went back out into the night.

When he reached his own camp, he reported to Hsiang Yü all that the governor had said. "If the governor of P'ei had not first conquered the land within the Pass how would you have dared to enter?" he said. "When a man has done you a great service it would not be right to attack him. It is better to treat him as a friend." Hsiang Yü agreed to this.

(l.8) The next day the governor of P'ei, accompanied by a hundred some horsemen, came to visit Hsiang Yü. When he reached Hsiang Yü's camp at Hung-men, he made his apologies, saying, "You and I have joined forces to attack Ch'in, you fighting north of the Yellow River, I fighting south. Quite beyond my expectation it happened that I was able to enter the Pass first, conquer Ch'in, and meet with you again here. Now it seems that some worthless person has been spreading talk and trying to cause dissension between us."

"It is your own marshal of the left, Ts'ao Wu-shang, who has been doing the talking," replied Hsiang Yü. "If it were not for him, how would I ever have doubted you?"

P.36 On the same day Hsiang Yü invited the governor of P'ei to remain and drink with him. Hsiang Yü and Hsiang Po as hosts sat facing east. Fan Tseng (whose other name was Ya-fu) took the place of honor facing south, while the governor of P'ei sat facing north with Chang Liang, as his attendant, facing west. Fan Tseng from time to time eyed Hsiang Yü and three times lifted up the jade pendant in the form of a broken ring which he wore and showed it to Yü, hinting that he should "break" once and for all with the governor, but Hsiang Yü sat silent and did not respond. Fan Tseng then rose and left the tent and, summoning Hsiang Yü's cousin, Hsiang Chuang, said to him, "Our lord is too kind-heated a man. Go back in and ask to propose a toast, and when the toast is finished, request to be allowed to perform a sword dance. Then attack the governor of P'ei and kill him where he sits. If you don't, you and all of us will end up as his prisoners!"

(l.10) Hsiang Chuang entered and proposed a toast. When the toast was finished he said, "Our lord and the governor of P'ei are pleased to drink together but I fear that, this being an army camp, we have nothing to offer by way of entertainment. I beg therefore to be allowed to present a sword dance." "Proceed," said Hsiang Yü, whereupon Hsiang Chuang drew his sword and began to dance. But Hsiang Po also rose and danced, constantly shielding and protecting the governor
P.37 of P'ei with his own body so that Hsiang Chuang could not attack him.

(l.2) With this, Chang Liang left and went to the gate of the camp to see Fan K'uai. "How are things proceeding today?" asked Fan K'uai.

"The situation is very grave," replied Chang Liang. "Now Hsiang Chuang has drawn his sword and is dancing, always with his eyes set on the governor of P'ei!"

(l.4) "This is serious indeed!" said Fan K'uai. "I beg you to let me go in and share the fate of the rest!" Fan K'uai buckled on his sword, grasped his shield, and entered the gate of the camp. The sentries standing with

crossed spears tried to stop him from entering but, tipping his shield to either side, he knocked the men to the ground. Entering the camp, he went and pulled back the curtain of the tent and stood facing west, glaring fixedly at Hsiang Yü. His hair stood on end and his eyes blazed with fire.

(l.7) Hsiang Yü put his hand on his sword and raised himself up on one knee.[9] "Who is our guest?" he asked.

"Fan K'uai, the carriage attendant of the governor of P'ei," announced Chang Liang.

(l.8) "He is a stouthearted fellow," said Hsiang Yü. "Give him a cup of wine!" A large cup of wine was passed to Fan K'uai, who knelt and accepted it, and then rose again and drank it standing up. "Give him a shoulder of pork," ordered Hsiang Yü, and he was given a piece of parboiled pork shoulder. Fan K'uai placed his shield upside down on the ground, put the pork shoulder on top of it, drew his sword, and began to cut and eat the meat.

(l.11) "You are a brave man," said Hsiang Yü. "Can you drink some more?"

"I would not hesitate if you offered me death! Why should I refuse a cup of wine?" he replied. "The king of Ch'in[10] had the heart of a
P.38 tiger and a wolf. He killed men as though he thought he could never finish, he punished men as though he were afraid he would never get around to them all, and the whole world revolted against him. King Huai of Ch'u made a promise with all the leaders that whoever defeated Ch'in first and entered the capital of Hsien-yang should become its king. Now the governor of P'ei has defeated Ch'in and entered Hsien-yang ahead of all others. He has not dared to lay a finger on the slightest thing, but has closed up and sealed the palace rooms and returned to Pa-shang to encamp and await your arrival. The reason he sent officers to guard the Pass was to prevent thieves from getting in and to prepare for an emergency. After suffering great hardship and winning such merit, he has not been rewarded by the grant of a fief and title. Instead you have listened to some worthless talk and are

[9] The Chinese of this age had no chairs, but sat on mats on the floor.
[10] I.e., the First Emperor of Ch'in.

about to punish a man of merit. This is no more than a repetition of the fated Ch'in. If I may be so bold, I advise you not to go through with it!"

(l.7) Hsiang Yü, having no answer to this, said "Sit down!" Fan K'uai took a seat next to Chang Liang. After they had been seated for a while, the governor of P'ei got up and went to the toilet, summoning Fan K'uai to go with him. When they had been outside for a while, Hsiang Yü sent Colonel Ch'en P'ing to call the governor back in. "When I left just now," said the governor, "I failed to say good-by. What should I do?"

(l.10) "Great deeds do not wait on petty caution; great courtesy does not need little niceties," replied Fan K'uai. "This fellow is about to get out his carving knife and platter and make mincemeat of us! Why should you say good-by to him?"

With this, the governor of P'ei left, ordering Chang Liang to stay behind and make some excuse for him. "What did you bring as gifts?" asked Chang Liang.

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"I have a pair of white jade discs which I intended to give to Hsiang Yü," replied the governor, "and a pair of jade wine dippers for Fan Tseng, but when I found that they were angry I did not dare to present them. You must present them for me." "I will do my best," said Chang Liang.

(l.3)

At this time Hsiang Yü's camp was at Hung-men, and the governor of P'ei's camp at Pa-shang some forty *li* away. The governor of P'ei left his carriages and horsemen where they were and slipped away from the camp on horseback, accompanied by only four men, Fan K'uai, Lord T'eng, Chin Ch'iang, and Chi Hsin, who bore swords and shields and hastened on foot. Following the foot of Mount Li, they returned by a secret way through Chih-yang.

When the governor left the camp he told Chang Liang, "By the road I will take it is no more than twenty *li* back to our camp. When you think I have had time to reach the camp, then go back and join the party." After the governor of P'ei had left and enough time had elapsed for him to reach camp, Chang Liang went in and made apologies. "The governor of P'ei was regrettably rather far gone in his cups and was unable to say good-by. He has respectfully requested

(l.4)

me on his behalf to present this pair of white jade discs to Your Lordship with his humblest salutation, and to General Fan Tseng this pair of jade wine dippers."

(l.8) "Where is the governor of P'ei?" asked Hsiang Yü.

"He perceived that Your Lordship was likely to reprove him for his shortcomings," replied Chang Liang, "and so he slipped away alone and returned to his camp."

(l.10) Hsiang Yü accepted the jade discs and placed them beside him on his mat, but Fan Tseng put the dippers on the ground, drew his sword and smashed them to pieces. "Ah!" he said, "it does not do to lay plans with an idiot! It is the governor of P'ei who will snatch the world out of our hands, and on that day all of us will become his prisoners."

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When the governor of P'ei got back to his camp he immediately had Ts'ao Wu-shang seized and executed.

(l.2) A few days later Hsiang Yü led his troops west and massacred the inhabitants of Hsien-yang, the capital city, killing Tzu-ying, the king of Ch'in, who had already surrendered, and setting fire to the palaces of Ch'in; the fire burned for three months before it went out. Then he gathered up all the goods, treasures, and waiting women, and started east.

(l.3) Someone advised Hsiang Yü, saying, "The area within the Pass is protected on all four sides by barriers of mountains and rivers, and the land is rich and fertile. This is the place to make your capital and rule as a dictator." But Hsiang Yü saw that the palaces of Ch'in had all been burned and destroyed, and he remembered his native land and longed only to return east. "To become rich and famous and then not go back to your old home is like putting on an embroidered coat and going out walking in the night," he said. "Who is to know about it?"

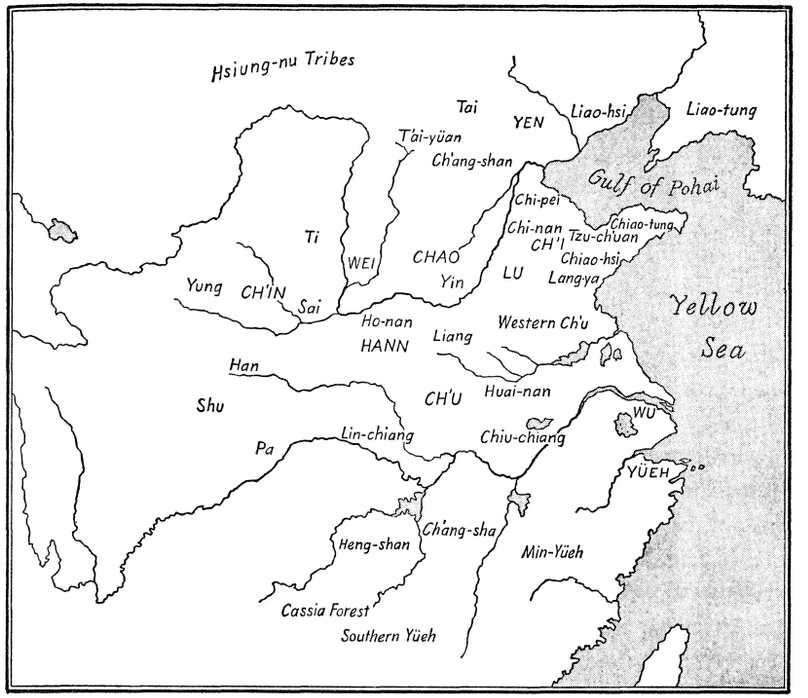
Later the man who had advised him remarked, "People say that the men of Ch'u are nothing but monkeys with hats on, and now I know what they mean!" Hsiang Yü heard about the remark and had the adviser boiled alive.

Hsiang Yü sent an envoy to report to King Huai of Ch'u. "Let all be done according to the agreement," the king replied. Hsiang Yü

then honored King Huai with the title of "Righteous Emperor." Wishing to make himself a king, he first conferred titles on his generals and ministers, telling them, "When the rebellion broke out in the empire, I temporarily set up the heirs of the former feudal rulers, so that they would attack Ch'in. But it was you, my generals, and I who actually donned armor, took up our weapons, and led the undertaking, camping for three years in the open fields, until our might at last destroyed Ch'in and brought peace to the world. As for the Righteous Emperor, though he has done nothing to win merit, it is for various reasons fitting that we assign him a portion of the territory to rule." The generals all expressing agreement, Hsiang Yü accordingly divided the empire and set up the generals as marquises and kings.

Hsiang Yü and Fan Tseng suspected that the governor of P'ei had ambitions to seize the whole empire. But since they had already made their peace with him, and hesitated to go back on the agreement to make him ruler of the land within the Pass, for fear that the other leaders would revolt, they plotted together in secret, saying, "The area of Pa and Shu is cut off by mountains and inhabited largely by settlers sent by Ch'in. Thus we can say that it too is a 'land within the pass.'" With this as an excuse they set up the governor of P'ei as king of Han, ruling over the area of Pa, Shu, and Han,[11] with his capital at Nan-cheng. The real land within the Pass they divided into three parts, and they made kings of the Ch'in generals who had surrendered, so that the latter could block any advance of the king of Han. Thus Hsiang Yü made Chang Han the king of Yung, ruling over the land west of the city of Hsien-yang, with his capital at Fei-ch'iu. The chief secretary Ssu-ma Hsin had formerly been prison warden of Yüeh-yang and had done a great kindness for Hsiang Liang, while Colonel Tung I was the one who had originally urged Chang Han to surrender to the Ch'u army. Therefore Hsiang Yü made Ssu-ma Hsin the king of Sai, ruling the area from Hsien-yang east to the Yellow River, with his capital at Yüeh-yang, and made Tung I the king of Ti, ruling the province of Shang, with his capital at Kao-nu. Pao, the king of Wei, he transferred to the position of king of Western Wei, ruling Ho-tung, with his capital at P'ing-yang. Shen Yang, governor of Hsia-ch'iu, a

[11] The area southwest of the Ch'in capital, on the far western border of China.



PRINCIPAL FEUDAL KINGDOMS OF LATE CHOU AND EARLY HAN TIMES

favorite minister of Chang Erh, had formerly conquered the province of Ho-nan and gone to welcome the Ch'u army on the banks of the Yellow River. Therefore Hsiang Yü set up Shen Yang as king of Ho-nan, with his capital at Lo-yang. Ch'eng, the king of Hann, remained at his former capital, Yang-ti. Ssu-ma Ang, general of Chao, had pacified the area of Ho-nei and several times distinguished himself, so he was set up as king of Yin, ruling Ho-nei, with his capital at Chao-ko. Hsieh, the king of Chao, was removed and made king of Tai. The prime minister of Chao, Chang Erh, was a man of worthy character and had, moreover, followed Hsiang Yü in his march through the Pass. Therefore he was made king of Ch'ang-shan, ruling the land of Chao, with his capital at Hsiang-kuo. The lord of Tang-yang, Ch'ing Pu, as a general of Ch'u had repeatedly won the highest distinction in battle and therefore was made king of Chiu-chiang, his capital at Liu. Wu Jui, the lord of P'o, had led the forces of the hundred Yüeh to aid the other leaders and had also followed Hsiang Yü within the Pass. Therefore he was made king of Heng-shan, his capital at Chu. Kung Ao, chief minister to the Righteous Emperor, had led troops in attacking the Nan district and had won great merit; accordingly he was made king of Lin-chiang, his capital at Chiang-ling. Han Kuang, the king of Yen, was moved to the position of king of Liao-tung. Tsang Tu, general of Yen, had joined the Ch'u forces in rescuing Chao and afterwards had accompanied Hsiang Yü through the Pass, so Hsiang Yü made him king of Yen, his capital at Chi. T'ien Shih, the king of Ch'i, was moved to the position of king of Chiao-tung. T'ien Tu, general of Ch'i, because he had joined Ch'u in rescuing Chao and entering the Pass, was made king of Ch'i, with his capital at Lin-tzu. T'ien An was the grandson of King Chien of Ch'i whom Ch'in had deposed. At the time when Hsiang Yü crossed the Yellow River and went to the aid of Chao, T'ien An had captured several cities of Chi-pei and had led his troops and surrendered to Hsiang Yü. Therefore he was made king of Chi-pei, his capital at Po-yang. T'ien Jung, because he had several times betrayed Hsiang Liang and refused to send troops to join Ch'u in its attack on Ch'in, was not enfeoffed. Ch'en Yü, the lord of Ch'eng-an, had discarded his seals of authority as a general and fled, refusing to follow Hsiang Yü through the Pass.

But Hsiang Yü learned of his reputation as a man of worth and of his services to Chao and, hearing that he was living in Nan-p'i, enfeoffed him with the three surrounding districts. Mei Hsüan, general of Wu Jui, the lord of P'o, because of his many services, was enfeoffed as a marquis with a hundred thousand households. Hsiang Yü made himself "Dictator King of Western Ch'u," ruling nine provinces, with his capital at P'eng-ch'eng.

In the first year of Han [206 B.C.],[12] the fourth month, the various leaders left the command of Hsiang Yü and proceeded to their own countries. Hsiang Yü also departed and went to his kingdom. He then sent an envoy to transfer the residence of the Righteous Emperor, announcing that "the emperors of ancient times, who ruled over an area a thousand miles on each side, invariably resided on the upper reaches of a river." The envoy accordingly moved the Righteous Emperor to the district of Ch'en in Ch'ang-sha, pressing him to hurry on his way. The emperor's ministers became increasingly disillusioned and turned their backs on him. Hsiang Yü then secretly ordered the kings of Heng-shan and Lin-chiang to attack and murder the Righteous Emperor in the region of the Yangtze.

Ch'eng, the king of Hann, had won no merit in battle, so Hsiang Yü did not send him to his kingdom but instead took him with him to P'eng-ch'eng. There he deprived him of his title, made him a marquis, and later murdered him. Tsang Tu, the new king of Yen, proceeded to his realm and attempted to drive out the former king, Han Kuang, and send him to Liao-tung, the territory newly assigned to him. But Han Kuang refused to obey, so Tsang Tu attacked and killed him at Wu-chung and made himself king of Liao-tung as well. When T'ien Jung heard that Hsiang Yü had moved Shih, the king of Ch'i, to Chiao-tung, and set up T'ien Tu, a general of Ch'i, as the new king of Ch'i, he was very angry and refused to send Shih to Chiao-tung. Instead he declared Ch'i to be in revolt, and marched forth to attack T'ien Tu. T'ien Tu fled to Ch'u. T'ien Shih, king of Ch'i, fearful of Hsiang Yü, fled to Chiao-tung, thus reaching his new realm.

[12] The Han dynasty counted its years from the time when its founder, Liu Chi, first became king of Han, though it was not until 202 B.C. that he actually gained control of the whole empire.

T'ien Jung, in a rage, pursued and attacked him, killing him at Chi-mo. T'ien Jung then set himself up as king of Ch'i, marched west, and attacked and killed T'ien An, the new king of Chi-pei. Thus he became ruler of the three areas of Ch'i, Chi-pei, and Chiao-tung. He then presented P'eng Yüeh with the seals of office of a general and sent him to lead a revolt in the region of Liang.

Ch'en Yü, the former general of Chao, secretly sent Chang T'ung and Hsia Yüeh to advise T'ien Jung, saying, "Hsiang Yü's actions as ruler of the empire have been completely unjust. All the former kings he has made rulers of poor territories, giving the best lands to his own ministers and generals to rule. He has expelled the king of Chao, my former lord, and sent him north to live in Tai. I consider such actions inexcusable. I have heard that, as king of Ch'i, you have taken up arms and refused to bow to such unrighteousness. I beg that you will send troops to aid me so that I may attack Chang Erh, the new king of Ch'ang-shan, who is now ruling the land of Chao, and restore the former king of Chao. Then his kingdom may act as a protective barrier for you."

The king of Ch'i approved this suggestion, and dispatched troops to Chao. Ch'en Yü called up all the troops from the three districts under his command and, joining forces with Ch'i, attacked Chang Erh, the king of Ch'ang-shan, inflicting a severe defeat. Chang Erh fled and joined the king of Han. Ch'en Yü proceeded to Tai and escorted Hsieh, the former king of Chao, back to Chao. In turn, the king of Chao set up Ch'en Yü as king of Tai.

It was at this time that the king of Han returned from his fief and reconquered the three new territories of Ch'in. When Hsiang Yü received word that the king of Han had united all the area within the Pass under his rule and was about to proceed east, and that Ch'i and Liang were in revolt against him, he was enraged. He made Cheng Ch'ang, the former district magistrate of Wu, the king of Hann in order to block the advance of the Han armies, and dispatched Chüeh, the lord of Hsiao, and others, with orders to attack P'eng Yüeh, but P'eng Yüeh defeated them.

The king of Han sent Chang Liang to seize the region of Hann. Chang Liang sent a letter to Hsiang Yü, saying, "The king of Han

has been deprived of the position which was rightly his. He desires to be given the territory within the Pass according to the original agreement. If this is done he will halt and proceed no farther east." He also sent to Hsiang Yü rebellious letters from Ch'i and Liang, proving that Ch'i intended to join with Liang in destroying Ch'u. As a result, Hsiang Yü for the moment gave up the idea of marching west and instead proceeded north to attack Ch'i. He sent an order for troops to Ch'ing Pu, the king of Chiu-chiang. Ch'ing Pu, pleading illness, refused to go in person, but instead sent his general with a force of several thousand men. Because of this incident, Hsiang Yü came to hate Ch'ing Pu.

In the winter of the second year of Han [205 B.C.] Hsiang Yü proceeded north as far as Ch'eng-yang. T'ien Jung led his troops to meet him there in battle, but failed to win a victory and fled to P'ing-yüan. Hsiang Yü marched north, firing and leveling the fortifications and dwellings of Ch'i, butchering all the soldiers of T'ien Jung who surrendered to him, and binding and taking prisoner the old people, women, and children. Thus he seized control of Ch'i as far as the northern sea, inflicting great damage and destruction. The people of Ch'i once more banded together in revolt. With this, T'ien Jung's younger brother, T'ien Heng, gathered a force of twenty or thirty thousand men from among the soldiers of Ch'i who had fled into hiding, and raised a revolt in Ch'eng-yang. Hsiang Yü was thus forced to remain in the area and continue fighting, but he was not able to put down the rebels.

In the spring the king of Han, with the forces of five of the other feudal leaders numbering 560,000 men under his command, marched east and attacked Ch'u. When Hsiang Yü received word of this, he ordered his subordinate generals to continue the assault on Ch'i, while he himself led a force of thirty thousand picked men south through Lu to Hu-ling.

In the fourth month the king of Han had already entered P'eng-ch'eng, the capital of Ch'u, had seized possession of its treasures and beautiful women, and was spending his days in feasting and revelry. Hsiang Yü marched west through Hsiao and at dawn attacked the Han army, fighting his way back east as far as P'eng-ch'eng, and in

the course of the day inflicted a major defeat. When the Han army fled, he pursued it to the Ssu and Ku Rivers, killing over a hundred thousand Han soldiers. The remainder all fled south to the mountains, where Hsiang Yü once more pursued and attacked them on the Sui River east of Ling-pi. Thus in its retreat the Han army was constantly pressed by the Ch'u forces and many of its men killed. Some hundred thousand Han soldiers were driven into the Sui River, so that the flow of the river was blocked. Hsiang Yü had surrounded the king of Han with a threefold line of troops, when a great wind arose and began to blow from the northwest, breaking down trees, toppling roofs, and raising clouds of sand, so that the sky grew dark and the day turned to night. As the storm advanced and bore down upon the forces of Ch'u, they were thrown into great confusion and their lines crumbled. The king of Han was thus able to slip through with twenty or thirty horsemen and escape.

The king of Han hoped to pass through his old home of P'ei and gather up his family before proceeding west. But Hsiang Yü had in the meantime sent men to pursue him to P'ei and seize the members of his family, so that they had all fled into hiding and he could not find them. Along the road, however, he happened to encounter his son (later Emperor Hui) and daughter (later Princess Yüan of Lu). Putting them in the carriage, he hastened on his way.

The horsemen of Ch'u were in close pursuit, and the king of Han in desperation several times pushed his little son and daughter out of the carriage, but each time Lord T'eng, who was with him, got out, picked them up, and put them back in the carriage.[13] This had happened three times when Lord T'eng said, "No matter how sorely we are pressed in chase it will not do to abandon the children!"

The king of Han at last managed to elude his pursuers and went in search of his father and wife, but could find them nowhere. They, in the meantime, accompanied by Shen I-chi, had fled by a secret route and were searching for the king, but instead of finding him they stumbled into the Ch'u army and were seized and led back to the

[13] According to the much more plausible account of this incident in the biography of Lord T'eng (*Shih chi* 95) the king did not actually push the children out of the carriage, but only attempted to do so by kicking them with his foot, whereupon Lord T'eng each time pulled them back to safety.

camp. When their capture was reported to Hsiang Yü, he ordered them to be kept under guard in the midst of his army.

At this time Lü Tse, the marquis of Chou-lü, elder brother of the king of Han's wife, was in Hsia-i with a force of troops loyal to the king. The king secretly made his way there and joined him. Gathering his soldiers together bit by bit, he proceeded to Jung-yang, where he held a rendezvous of all his defeated divisions. In addition, Hsiao Ho dispatched all the old men and underaged youths from the area within the Pass to Jung-yang, so that the Han army again reached sizable strength.

Hsiang Yü, after his initial victory at P'eng-ch'eng, had taken advantage of his supremacy to pursue the Han forces north. Now, however, he fought with the Han army once more in the area of So in Ching, south of Jung-yang, and was defeated. Thus Hsiang Yü was unable to proceed west of Jung-yang. While Hsiang Yü was recapturing P'eng-ch'eng from the king of Han and pursuing him to Jung-yang, T'ien Heng managed to gain control of Ch'i and set up T'ien Jung's son Kuang as king of Ch'i. When the king of Han was defeated at P'eng-ch'eng, the other feudal lords all deserted him and went over to the side of Ch'u. The king camped at Jung-yang and constructed a walled supply road along the banks of the Yellow River in order to transport grain from the Ao Granary.

In the third year of Han [204 B.C.] Hsiang Yü several times attacked and cut off the Han supply road so that the king of Han grew short of provisions. Afraid of what might happen, he made a bid for peace, asking that he be allowed to retain all the territory west of Jung-yang as part of Han. Hsiang Yü was in favor of listening to the suggestion, but Fan Tseng (now marquis of Li-yang) advised him against it. "It is easy enough to make concessions to Han, but if you let him go this time and do not seize him, you are bound to regret it later!" Hsiang Yü and Fan Tseng then joined in pressing the siege of Jung-yang.

The king of Han was in great distress but, employing a strategy suggested by Ch'en P'ing, he managed to cause dissension between his two enemies. An envoy having arrived from Hsiang Yü, the king ordered a great feast prepared and brought in to be served to him. When the king saw the envoy, however, he pretended to be thoroughly

startled and said, "Oh, I supposed you were the envoy from Fan Tseng, but I see on the contrary you have come from Hsiang Yü!" He then had the feast taken away and a poor meal brought and served to the man. When the envoy returned and reported this, Hsiang Yü began to suspect that Fan Tseng had made some secret alliance with Han and was trying gradually to usurp his own authority. Fan Tseng, deeply angered, announced, "The affairs of the world have been largely settled. My lord must now manage things for himself. For my part, I beg to be relieved of my duties and returned to the ranks of a common soldier." Hsiang Yü granted his request and Fan Tseng departed, but before he had got as far as P'eng-ch'eng an ulcerous sore broke out on his back and he died.

The Han general Chi Hsin advised the king, saying, "The situation is very grave. I beg you to let me deceive Ch'u for you by taking your place as king. In this way you will be able to slip away in secret." Accordingly, the king of Han dressed two thousand women of Jung-yang in armor and, when night fell, sent them out by the eastern gate of the city. The soldiers of Ch'u rushed to attack them from all sides. Chi Hsin then rode forth in the yellow-canopied royal carriage with its plumes attached to the left side and announced, "The food in the city is exhausted. The king of Han surrenders!" While the army of Ch'u joined in cheers of victory, the king of Han with twenty or thirty horsemen slipped out by the western gate and fled to Ch'eng-kao.

When Hsiang Yü saw Chi Hsin he demanded to know where the king of Han was. "The king of Han," replied Chi Hsin, "has already left the city!" Hsiang Yü had Chi Hsin burned alive.

The king of Han left the grand secretary Chou K'o, Lord Ts'ung, and Wei Pao, the former king of Wei, to guard Jung-yang. But Chou K'o and Lord Ts'ung plotted together, saying, "It is hard to guard a city with the king of a country that has once revolted,"[14] and so together they murdered Wei Pao.

Hsiang Yü captured Jung-yang and took Chou K'o alive. "If you will be my general, I will make you supreme commander and enfeoff you with thirty thousand households," said Hsiang Yü, but Chou K'o

[14] Wei Pao had formerly revolted against the king of Han and had been taken prisoner.

only cursed him, saying, "If you do not hurry and surrender to the king of Han, you will be taken prisoner! You are no match for him!" Hsiang Yü, enraged, boiled Chou K'o alive and at the same time executed Lord Ts'ung.

After the king of Han escaped from Jung-yang, he fled south to Yüan and She, and joined Ch'ing Pu, the king of Chiu-chiang. Gathering soldiers as he went, he returned and guarded Ch'eng-kao.

In the fourth year of Han [203 B.C.] Hsiang Yü advanced with his forces and surrounded Ch'eng-kao. The king of Han escaped alone from the northern gate of Ch'eng-kao, accompanied only by Lord T'eng, crossed the Yellow River, and fled to Hsiu-wu, where he joined the armies of Chang Erh and Han Hsin. His subordinate generals one by one managed to escape from Ch'eng-kao and join him there. Hsiang Yü finally captured Ch'eng-kao and was about to proceed west, but Han sent troops to block him at Kung so he could go no further west. At the same time P'eng Yüeh crossed the Yellow River and attacked part of the Ch'u army at Tung-a, killing the Ch'u general Lord Hsieh. Hsiang Yü then marched east in person and attacked P'eng Yüeh.

The king of Han, having obtained command of the soldiers of Han Hsin, wished to cross the Yellow River and proceed south. On the advice of Cheng Chung, however, he abandoned this idea and instead stopped at Ho-nei and built a walled camp, sending Liu Chia to lead a band of men to aid P'eng Yüeh and to burn Ch'u's stores and provisions. Hsiang Yü proceeded east and attacked them, forcing P'eng Yüeh to flee.

The king of Han then led his troops back across the Yellow River and retook Ch'eng-kao, camped at Kuang-wu, and again began to draw provisions from the Ao Granary. Hsiang Yü, having pacified the eastern seaboard, returned west and camped opposite the Han forces at Kuang-wu, and thus the two armies remained, each in its own camp, for several months.

Meanwhile P'eng Yüeh continued to foment rebellion in the region of Liang, and from time to time cut off Ch'u's supply lines. Hsiang Yü, much troubled by this, constructed a sacrificial altar and, placing the "Venerable Sire," the king of Han's father, on it, he announced to

the king, "If you do not surrender to me at once, I shall boil your 'Venerable Sire' alive!"

"When you and I bowed together before King Huai and acknowledged our allegiance to him, we took a vow to be brothers," replied the king of Han. "Therefore my father is your father, too. If you insist now upon boiling your own father, I hope you will be good enough to send me a cup of the soup!"

Hsiang Yü, in a rage, was about to kill the old man, but Hsiang Po intervened: "No one knows yet how the affairs of the world will turn out. A man like the king of Han who has his eyes set upon the rulership of the world will hardly bother about a member of his family. Even if you kill his father, it will bring you no advantage, but only increase your misfortunes." Following his advice, Hsiang Yü desisted.

For a long time Ch'u and Han held their respective positions without making a decisive move, while their fighting men suffered the hardships of camp life and their old men and boys wore themselves out transporting provisions by land and water. Hsiang Yü sent word to the king of Han, saying, "The world has been in strife and confusion for several years now, solely because of the two of us. I would like to invite the king of Han to a personal combat to decide who is the better man. Let us bring no more needless suffering to the fathers and sons of the rest of the world." The king of Han scorned the offer with a laugh, saying, "Since I am no match for you in strength, I prefer to fight you with brains!"

Hsiang Yü then sent out one of his bravest men to challenge Han to combat. In the Han army there was a man who was very skillful at shooting from horseback, a so-called *lou-fan*.[15] Ch'u three times sent out men to challenge Han to combat, and each time this man shot and killed them on the spot. Hsiang Yü, enraged, buckled on his armor, took up a lance, and went out himself to deliver the challenge. The *lou-fan* was about to shoot when Hsiang Yü shouted and glared so fiercely at him that the man had not the courage to raise his eyes or lift a hand, but finally fled back within the walls and did not dare venture

[15] The men of the barbarian tribe of Lou-fan being famous for their skill in archery, the word *lou-fan* came to mean an expert bowman.

forth again. The king of Han secretly sent someone to find out who the new challenger was, and when he learned that it was Hsiang Yü himself he was greatly astonished. Hsiang Yü approached the place where the king of Han was standing, and the two of them talked back and forth across the ravine of Kuang-wu. The king berated Hsiang Yü for his crimes, while Hsiang Yü angrily demanded a single combat. When the king of Han refused to agree, Hsiang Yü shot him with a crossbow which he had concealed, and the king, wounded, fled into the city of Ch'eng-kao.

Hsiang Yü, receiving word that Han Hsin had already conquered the area north of the Yellow River, defeating Ch'i and Chao, and was about to attack Ch'u, sent Lung Chü to attack him. Han Hsin, joined by the cavalry general Kuan Ying, met his attack and defeated the Ch'u army, killing Lung Chü. Han Hsin then proceeded to set himself up as king of Ch'i. When Hsiang Yü heard that Lung Chü's army had been defeated, he was fearful and sent Wu She, a man of Hsü-i, to attempt to bargain with Han Hsin, but Han Hsin refused to listen.

At this time P'eng Yüeh had once more raised a revolt in the region of Liang, conquered it, and cut off Ch'u's sources of supply. Hsiang Yü summoned the marquis of Hai-ch'un, the grand marshal Ts'ao Chiu, and others and said to them, "Hold fast to the city of Ch'eng-kao. Even if the king of Han challenges you to a battle, take care and do not fight with him! You must not let him advance eastward! In fifteen days I can surely do away with P'eng Yüeh and bring the region of Liang under control once again. Then I will return and join you."

Hsiang Yü marched east and attacked Ch'en-liu and Wai-huang. Wai-huang held out for several days before it finally surrendered. Enraged, Hsiang Yü ordered all the men over the age of fifteen to be brought to a place east of the city, where he planned to butcher them. One of the retainers of the head of the district, a lad of thirteen, went and spoke to Hsiang Yü. "Wai-huang, oppressed by the might of P'eng Yüeh, was fearful and surrendered to him, hopeful that Your Majesty would come to the rescue," he said. "But now that you have arrived, if you butcher all the men, how can you hope to win the hearts of

the common people? East of here there are still a dozen cities of Liang, but all will be filled with terror and will not dare to surrender."

Hsiang Yü, acknowledging the reason of his words, pardoned all the men of Wai-huang who were marked for execution and proceeded east to Sui-yang. Hearing what had happened, the other cities made all haste to submit to him.

The king of Han meanwhile several times challenged the Ch'u army to a battle, but the Ch'u generals refused to send out their forces. Then he sent men to taunt and insult them for five or six days, until at last the grand marshal Ts'ao Chiu, in a rage, led his soldiers across the Ssu River. When the troops were halfway across the river, the Han force fell upon them and inflicted a severe defeat on the Ch'u army, seizing all the wealth of the country of Ch'u. Grand marshal Ts'ao Chiu, the chief secretary Tung I, and Ssu-ma Hsin, the king of Sai, all cut their throats on the banks of the Ssu. (Ts'ao Chiu, former prison warden of Chi, and Ssu-ma Hsin, former prison warden of Yüeh-yang, had both done favors for Hsiang Liang, and so had been trusted and employed by Hsiang Yü.)

Hsiang Yü was at this time in Sui-yang but, hearing of the defeat of the grand marshal's army, he led his troops back. The Han army had at the moment surrounded Chung-li Mo at Jung-yang, but when Hsiang Yü arrived, the Han forces, fearful of Ch'u, all fled to positions of safety in the mountains. At this time the Han troops were strong and had plenty of food, but Hsiang Yü's men were worn out and their provisions were exhausted.

The king of Han dispatched Lu Chia to bargain with Hsiang Yü for the return of his father, but Hsiang Yü refused to listen. The king then sent Lord Hou to bargain. This time Hsiang Yü agreed to make an alliance with Han to divide the empire between them, Han to have all the land west of the Hung Canal and Ch'u all the land to the east. In addition, upon Hsiang Yü's consent, the king of Han's father, mother, and wife were returned to him amid cheers of "Long life!" from the Han army. The king of Han enfeoffed Lord Hou as "Lord Who Pacifies the Nation." (Lord Hou retired and was unwilling to show himself again. Someone remarked, "This man

is the most eloquent pleader in the world. Wherever he goes he turns the whole nation on its head. Perhaps that is why he has been given the title 'Lord Who Pacifies the Nation.' ") [16]

After concluding the alliance, Hsiang Yü led his troops away to the east and the king of Han prepared to return west, but Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing advised him, saying, "Han now possesses over half the empire, and all the feudal lords are on our side, while the soldiers of Ch'u are weary and out of food. The time has come when Heaven will destroy Ch'u. It would be best to take advantage of Hsiang Yü's lack of food and seize him once for all. If we were to let him get away now without attacking him, it would be like nursing a tiger that will return to vex us later!"

The king of Han, approving their advice, in the fifth year of Han [202 B.C.] pursued Hsiang Yü as far as the south of Yang-hsia, where he halted and made camp. There he set a date for Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh to meet him and join in attacking the Ch'u army. But when he reached Ku-ling, the troops of Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh failed to appear for the rendezvous, and Hsiang Yü attacked him and inflicted a severe defeat. The king of Han withdrew behind his walls, deepened his moats, and guarded his position.

"The other leaders have not kept their promise. What shall I do?" he asked Chang Liang.

"The Ch'u army is on the point of being destroyed," Chang Liang replied, "but Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh have not yet been granted any territory.[17] It is not surprising that they do not come when summoned. If you will consent to share a part of the empire with them, they will surely come without a moment's hesitation. If this is impossible, I do not know what will happen. If you could assign to Han Hsin all the land from Ch'en east to the sea, and to P'eng Yüeh the land from Sui-yang north to Ku-ch'eng, so that each would feel he

[16] The passage in parentheses, the meaning of which is far from certain, does not appear in the parallel passage in *Han shu* 31, and may well be a later addition.

[17] Although they had received impressive titles—Han Hsin was "king of Ch'i," P'eng Yüeh was "prime minister of Wei"—no specific grants of territory had as yet been awarded them.

was actually fighting for his own good, then Ch'u could easily be defeated."

The king of Han, approving this suggestion, sent envoys to Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh, saying, "Let us join our forces in attacking Ch'u. When Ch'u has been defeated, I will give the land from Ch'en east to the sea to the king of Ch'i, and that from Sui-yang north to Ku-ch'eng to Prime Minister P'eng." When the envoys arrived and reported this to Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh, both replied, "We beg leave to proceed with our troops." Han Hsin then marched out of Ch'i. Liu Chia led his army from Shou-ch'un to join in attacking and massacring the men of Ch'eng-fu; from there he proceeded to Kai-hsia. The grand marshal Chou Yin revolted against Ch'u, using the men of Shu to massacre the inhabitants of Liu, gained control of the army of Chiu-chiang, and followed after Liu Chia and P'eng Yüeh. All met at Kai-hsia and made their way toward Hsiang Yü.

Hsiang Yü's army had built a walled camp at Kai-hsia, but his soldiers were few and his supplies exhausted. The Han army, joined by the forces of the other leaders, surrounded them with several lines of troops. In the night Hsiang Yü heard the Han armies all about him singing the songs of Ch'u. "Has Han already conquered Ch'u?" he exclaimed in astonishment. "How many men of Ch'u they have with them!" Then he rose in the night and drank within the curtains of his tent. With him were the beautiful lady Yü, who enjoyed his favor and followed wherever he went, and his famous steed Dapple, which he always rode. Hsiang Yü, filled with passionate sorrow, began to sing sadly, composing this song:

My strength plucked up the hills,
My might shadowed the world;
But the times were against me,
And Dapple runs no more.
When Dapple runs no more,
What then can I do?
Ah, Yü, my Yü,
What will your fate be?

He sang the the song several times through, and Lady Yü joined her voice with his. Tears streamed down his face, while all those about

him wept and were unable to lift their eyes from the ground. Then he mounted his horse and, with some eight hundred brave horsemen under his banner, rode into the night, burst through the encirclement to the south, and galloped away.

Next morning, when the king of Han became aware of what had happened, he ordered his cavalry general Kuan Ying to lead a force of five thousand horsemen in pursuit. Hsiang Yü crossed the Huai River, though by now he had only a hundred or so horsemen still with him. Reaching Yin-ling, he lost his way, and stopped to ask an old farmer for directions. But the farmer deceived him, saying, "Go left!", and when he rode to the left he stumbled into a great swamp, so that the Han troops were able to pursue and overtake him.

Hsiang Yü once more led his men east until they reached Tung-ch'eng. By this time he had only twenty-eight horsemen, while the Han cavalry pursuing him numbered several thousand.

Hsiang Yü, realizing that he could not escape, addressed his horsemen, saying, "It has been eight years since I first led my army forth. In that time I have fought over seventy battles. Every enemy I faced was destroyed, everyone I attacked submitted. Never once did I suffer defeat, until at last I became dictator of the world. But now suddenly I am driven to this desperate position! It is because Heaven would destroy me, not because I have committed any fault in battle. I have resolved to die today. But before I die, I beg to fight bravely and win for you three victories. For your sake I shall break through the enemy's encirclements, cut down their leaders, and sever their banners, that you may know it is Heaven which has destroyed me and no fault of mine in arms!" Then he divided his horsemen into four bands and faced them in four directions.

When the Han army had surrounded them several layers deep, Hsiang Yü said to his horsemen, "I will get one of those generals for you!" He ordered his men to gallop in all four directions down the hill on which they were standing, with instructions to meet again on the east side of the hill and divide into three groups. He himself gave a great shout and galloped down the hill. The Han troops scattered before him and he succeeded in cutting down one of their generals. At this time Yang Hsi was leader of the cavalry pursuing Hsiang Yü,

but Hsiang Yü roared and glared so fiercely at him that all his men and horses fled in terror some distance to the rear.

Hsiang Yü rejoined his men, who had formed into three groups. The Han army, uncertain which group Hsiang Yü was with, likewise divided into three groups and again surrounded them. Hsiang Yü once more galloped forth and cut down a Han colonel, killing some fifty to a hundred men. When he had gathered his horsemen together a second time, he found that he had lost only two of them. "Did I tell you the truth?" he asked. His men all bowed and replied, "You have done all you said."

Hsiang Yü, who by this time had reached Wu-chiang, was considering whether to cross over to the east side of the Yangtze. The village head of Wu-chiang, who was waiting with a boat on the bank of the river, said to him, "Although the area east of the Yellow River is small, it is some thousand miles in breadth and has a population of thirty or forty thousand. It would still be worth ruling. I beg you to make haste and cross over. I am the only one who has a boat, so that when the Han army arrives they will have no way to get across!"

Hsiang Yü laughed and replied, "It is Heaven that is destroying me. What good would it do me to cross the river? Once, with eight thousand sons from the land east of the river, I crossed over and marched west, but today not a single man of them returns. Although their fathers and brothers east of the river should take pity on me and make me their king, how could I bear to face them again? Though they said nothing of it, could I help but feel shame in my heart?" Then he added, "I can see that you are a worthy man. For five years I have ridden this horse, and I have never seen his equal. Again and again he has borne me hundreds of miles in a single day. Since I cannot bear to kill him, I give him to you."

Hsiang Yü then ordered all his men to dismount and proceed on foot, and with their short swords to close in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. Hsiang Yü alone killed several hundred of the Han men, until he had suffered a dozen wounds. Looking about him, he spied the Han cavalry marshal Lü Ma-t'ung. "We are old friends, are we not?" he asked. Lü Ma-t'ung eyed him carefully and then, pointing him out to Wang I, said, "This is Hsiang Yü!"

"I have heard that Han has offered a reward of a thousand catties of gold and a fief of ten thousand households for my head," said Hsiang Yü. "I will do you the favor!" And with this he cut his own throat and died.

Wang I seized his head, while the other horsemen trampled over each other in a struggle to get at Hsiang Yü's body, so that twenty or thirty of them were killed. In the end the cavalry attendant Yang Hsi, the cavalry marshal Lü Ma-t'ung, and the attendants Lü Sheng and Yang Wu each succeeded in seizing a limb. When the five of them fitted together the limbs and head, it was found that they were indeed those of Hsiang Yü. Therefore the fief was divided five ways, Lü Ma-t'ung being enfeoffed as marquis of Chung-shui, Wang I as marquis of Tu-yen, Yang Hsi as marquis of Ch'ih-ch'üan, Yang Wu as marquis of Wu-fang, and Lü Sheng as marquis of Nieh-yang.

With the death of Hsiang Yü, the entire region of Ch'u surrendered to Han, only Lu refusing to submit. The king of Han set out with the troops of the empire and was about to massacre the inhabitants of Lu. But because Lu had so strictly obeyed the code of honor and had shown its willingness to fight to the death for its acknowledged sovereign, he bore with him the head of Hsiang Yü and, when he showed it to the men of Lu, they forthwith surrendered.

King Huai of Ch'u had first enfeoffed Hsiang Yü as duke of Lu, and Lu was the last place to surrender. Therefore, the king of Han buried Hsiang Yü at Ku-ch'eng with the ceremony appropriate to a duke of Lu. The king proclaimed a period of mourning for him, wept, and then departed. All the various branches of the Hsiang family he spared from execution, and he enfeoffed Hsiang Po as marquis of She-yang. The marquises of T'ao, P'ing-kao, and Hsüan-wu were all members of the Hsiang family who were granted the imperial surname Liu.

The Grand Historian remarks: I have heard Master Chou say that Emperor Shun had eyes with double pupils. I have also heard that Hsiang Yü, too, had eyes with double pupils. Could it be that Hsiang Yü was a descendant of Emperor Shun? How sudden was his rise to power! When the rule of Ch'in floundered and Ch'en She led his re-

volt, local heroes and leaders arose like bees, struggling with each other for power in numbers too great to be counted. Hsiang Yü did not have so much as an inch of territory to begin with, but by taking advantage of the times he raised himself in the space of three years from a commoner in the fields to the position of commander of five armies of feudal lords. He overthrew Ch'in, divided up the empire, and parceled it out in fiefs to the various kings and marquises; but all power of government proceeded from Hsiang Yü and he was hailed as a dictator king. Though he was not able to hold this position to his death, yet from ancient times to the present there has never before been such a thing!

But when he went so far as to turn his back on the Pass and return to his native Ch'u, banishing the Righteous Emperor and setting himself up in his place, it was hardly surprising that the feudal lords revolted against him. He boasted and made a show of his own achievements. He was obstinate in his own opinions and did not abide by established ways. He thought to make himself a dictator, hoping to attack and rule the empire by force. Yet within five years he was dead and his kingdom lost. He met death at Tung-ch'eng, but even at that time he did not wake to or accept responsibility for his errors. "It is Heaven," he declared, "which has destroyed me, and no fault of mine in the use of arms!" Was he not indeed deluded?

Part III

THE VICTOR

Shih chi 8: The Basic Annals of Emperor Kao-tsu

Hsiang Yü was violent and tyrannical, while the king of Han practiced goodness and virtue. In anger he marched forth from Shu and Han, returning to conquer the three kingdoms of Ch'in. He executed Hsiang Yü and became an emperor, and all the world was brought to peace. He changed the statutes and reformed the ways of the people. Thus I made The Basic Annals of Emperor Kao-tsu.

Kao-tsu [1] was a native of the community of Chung-yang in the city of Feng, the district of P'ei. His family name was Liu and his polite name Chi. His father was known as the "Venerable Sire" and his mother as "Dame Liu."

Before he was born, Dame Liu was one day resting on the bank of a large pond when she dreamed that she encountered a god. At this time the sky grew dark and was filled with thunder and lightning. When Kao-tsu's father went to look for her, he saw a scaly dragon over the place where she was lying. After this she became pregnant and gave birth to Kao-tsu.

Kao-tsu had a prominent nose and a dragonlike face, with beautiful whiskers on his chin and cheeks; on his left thigh he had seventy-two black moles.[2] He was kind and affectionate with others, liked to help people, and was very understanding. He always had great ideas and paid little attention to the business the rest of his family was engaged in.

When he grew up he took the examination to become an official

[1] Kao-tsu, meaning "Exalted Ancestor," is the posthumous title of Liu Chi, founder of the Han dynasty. Liu Chi's familiar name, Pang, was tabooed during the Han and is never mentioned in the *Shih chi*. Since Ssu-ma Ch'ien was writing during the Han, he often refers to members of the imperial family by the titles they later acquired. Hence Kao-tsu's wife is called Empress Lü, though this is often anachronistic from the point of view of the narrative.

[2] Seventy-two, the multiple of eight and nine, is a mystic number in Chinese thought.

and was made village head of Ssu River. He treated all the other officials in the office with familiarity and disdain. He was fond of wine and women and often used to go to Dame Wang's or old lady Wu's and drink on credit. When he got drunk and lay down to sleep, the old women, to their great wonder, would always see something like a dragon over the place where he was sleeping. Also, whenever he would drink and stay at their shops, they would sell several times as much wine as usual. Because of these strange happenings, when the end of the year came around the old women would always destroy Kao-tsu's credit slips and clear his account.

Kao-tsu was once sent on *corvée* labor to the capital city of Hsien-yang and happened to have an opportunity to see the First Emperor of Ch'in. When he saw him he sighed and said, "Ah, this is the way a great man should be."

There was a man of Shan-fu, one Master Lü, who was a friend of the magistrate of P'ei. In order to avoid the consequences of a feud, he accepted the hospitality of the magistrate and made his home in P'ei. When the officials and the wealthy and influential people of P'ei heard that the magistrate had a distinguished guest, they all came to pay their respects. Hsiao Ho, being the director of officials, was in charge of gifts and informed those who came to call that anyone bringing a gift of less than one thousand cash would be seated below the main hall. Kao-tsu, who as a village head was in the habit of treating the other officials with contempt, falsely wrote on his calling card: "With respects—ten thousand cash," though in fact he did not have a single cash. When his card was sent in, Master Lü was very surprised and got up and came to the gate to greet him. Master Lü was very good at reading people's faces and when he saw Kao-tsu's features he treated him with great honor and respect and led him in to a seat. "Liu Chi," remarked Hsiao Ho, "does a good deal of fine talking, but so far has accomplished very little." But Kao-tsu, disdaining the other guests, proceeded to take a seat of honor without further ado.

When the drinking was nearly over, Master Lü glanced at Kao-tsu in such a way as to indicate that he should stay a while longer, and so Kao-tsu dawdled over his wine. "Since my youth," said Master Lü, "I have been fond of reading faces. I have read many faces, but none with signs like yours. You must take good care of yourself, I beg you. I have a daughter whom I hope you will do me the honor of accepting as your wife."

When the party was over, Dame Lü was very angry with her husband. "You have always idolized this girl and planned to marry her to some person of distinction," she said. "The magistrate of P'ei is a friend of yours and has asked for her, but you would not give your consent. How can you be so insane as to give her to Liu Chi?"

"This is not the sort of thing women and children can understand!" replied Master Lü. Eventually he married the girl to Kao-tsu, and it was this daughter of Master Lü who became Empress Lü and gave birth to Emperor Hui and Princess Yüan of Lu.

When Kao-tsu was acting as village head he once asked for leave to go home and visit his fields. Empress Lü at the time was in the fields weeding with her two children. When an old man passed by and asked for something to drink, Empress Lü accordingly gave him some food. The old man examined her face and said, "Madam will become the most honored woman in the world." She asked him to examine her children. Looking at her son, he said, "It is because of this boy that madam will obtain honor," and when he examined the girl, he said that she too would be honored.

After the old man had gone on, Kao-tsu happened to appear from an outhouse nearby. Empress Lü told him all about how the traveler had passed by and, examining her and her children, had predicted great honor for all of them. When Kao-tsu inquired where the man was, she replied, "He cannot have gone very far away!"

Kao-tsu ran after the old man and, overtaking him, questioned him. "The lady and the little children I examined a while ago," he replied, "all resemble you. But when I examine your face, I find such worth that I cannot express it in words!"

Kao-tsu thanked him, saying "If it is really as you say, I will surely not forget your kindness!" But when Kao-tsu finally became honored he could never find out where the old man had gone.

When Kao-tsu was acting as village head, he fashioned a kind of hat out of sheaths of bamboo and sent his "thief-seeker" [3] to the district of Hsieh to have some made up for him, which he wore from time to time. Even after he became famous he continued to wear these hats. These are the so-called Liu family hats.

As village head Kao-tsu was ordered to escort a group of forced laborers from the district of P'ei to Mount Li.[4] On the way, however, so many of the laborers ran away that Kao-tsu began to suspect that by the time he reached his destination they would all have disappeared. When they had reached a place in the midst of a swamp west of Feng, Kao-tsu halted and began to drink. That night he loosened the bonds of the laborers he was escorting and freed them, saying, "Go, all of you! I too shall go my own way from here."

Among the laborers were ten or so brave men who asked to go with him. Kao-tsu, full of wine, led the men in the night along a path through the swamp, sending one of them to walk ahead. The man who had gone ahead returned and reported, "There is a great snake lying across the path ahead. I beg you to turn back!"

"Where a brave man marches what is there to fear?" replied Kao-tsu drunkenly and, advancing, drew his sword and slashed at the snake. After he had cut the snake in two and cleared the path, he walked on a mile or so and then lay down to sleep off his drunkenness.

When one of the men who had lagged behind came to the place where the snake lay, he found an old woman crying in the night. He asked her why she was crying and she answered, "I am crying because someone has killed my son."

"How did your son come to be killed?" he asked.

"My son was the son of the White Emperor," said the old woman. "He had changed himself into a snake and was lying across the road. Now he has been cut in two by the son of the Red Emperor, and therefore I weep."

The man did not believe the old woman and was about to accuse her of lying, when suddenly she disappeared. When the man caught up with Kao-tsu, he found him already awake and reported what

[3] A subordinate official in the local administration.

[4] Where the First Emperor of Ch'in was building his mausoleum.

had happened. Kao-tsu was very pleased in his heart and set great store by the incident, while his followers day by day regarded him with greater awe.

The First Emperor of Ch'in, repeatedly declaring that there were signs in the southeastern sky indicating the presence of a "Son of Heaven," decided to journey east to suppress the threat to his power. Kao-tsu, suspecting that he himself was the cause of the visit, fled into hiding among the rocky wastes of the mountains and swamps between Mang and Tang. Empress Lü and others who went with her to look for him, however, were always able to find him. Kao-tsu, wondering how she could do this, asked her and she replied, "There are always signs in the clouds over the place where you are. By following these we manage to find you every time." Kao-tsu was very pleased in his heart. When word of this circulated among the young men of the district of P'ei, many of them sought to become his followers.

In the autumn of the first year of the reign of the Second Emperor of Ch'in [209] Ch'en She and his band arose in Chi. When Ch'en She had reached the area of Ch'en and made himself a king with the title of "Magnifier of Ch'u," many of the provinces and districts murdered their head officials and joined in the rebellion.

The magistrate of P'ei, fearful of what might happen, wished to declare P'ei a party to the rebellion, but his chief officials Hsiao Ho and Ts'ao Ts'an said, "You are an official of Ch'in. Now, though you hope to turn your back on Ch'in and lead the men of P'ei, we fear they will not listen to you. We would suggest that you summon all the various men who have fled and are in hiding elsewhere. You should be able to obtain several hundred men, and with these you can threaten the rest of the people and force them to obey you."

Accordingly the magistrate sent Fan K'uai to summon Kao-tsu, who by this time had almost a hundred followers. Kao-tsu came with Fan K'uai, but the magistrate, repenting his action and fearing a move against himself, closed the gates and guarded the city, preparing to execute Hsiao Ho and Ts'ao Ts'an. Hsiao Ho and Ts'ao Ts'an in fear climbed over the wall and fled to Kao-tsu's protection. Kao-tsu then wrote a message on a piece of silk and shot it over the city walls

saying, "The world has long suffered beneath Ch'in. Now, though you men of P'ei should guard the city for the sake of the magistrate, the other nobles who have risen in rebellion will join in massacring the inhabitants of the city. If you will unite and do away with the magistrate, select from among your sons a worthy man to be your leader, and declare yourselves with the other nobles, then your homes and families shall all be spared. But if you do not, you will all be massacred without further ado!"

The elders then led the young men and together they murdered the magistrate of P'ei, opened the city gates, and welcomed Kao-tsu. They wished to make him magistrate, but Kao-tsu announced, "The world today is in chaos with the nobles rising up everywhere. If you do not make a wise choice of a leader now, you will be cut down in one stroke and your blood will drench the earth. It is not that I care for my own safety, but only that I fear my abilities are not sufficient to insure your welfare. This is a most serious business. I beg you to consult once more among yourselves and select someone who is truly worthy."

Hsiao Ho, Ts'ao Ts'an, and the other civil officials were concerned for their own safety and, fearful that if they assumed leadership and the undertaking proved unsuccessful, Ch'in would exterminate their families, they all yielded in favor of Kao-tsu. Then all the elders announced. "For a long time we have heard of the strange and wonderful happenings and the predictions of greatness concerning Liu Chi. Moreover, when we divine by the tortoise and milfoil, we find that no one receives such responses as Liu Chi!" With this, Kao-tsu declined several times but, since no one else dared to accept the position, he allowed himself to be made governor of P'ei. He then performed sacrifices to the Yellow Emperor and to the ancient warrior Ch'ih Yu in the district office of P'ei and anointed his drums with the blood of the sacrifice. All his flags and banners he had made of red. Because the old woman had said that it was the son of the Red Emperor who had killed the snake, the son of the White Emperor, he decided to honor the color red in this fashion.

The young men and distinguished officials such as Hsiao Ho, Ts'ao Ts'an, Fan K'uai, and others gathered together for him a band

of two or three thousand men of P'ei and attacked Hu-ling and Fang-yü. They then returned and guarded the city of Feng.

In the second year of the Second Emperor [208 B.C.] Ch'en She's general Chou Wen marched west with his army as far as Hsi and then returned. Yen, Chao, Ch'i, and Wei all set up their own kings and Hsiang Liang and Hsiang Yü began their uprising in Wu.

Ch'in's overseer in the province of Ssu River, a man named P'ing, led a force of troops and surrounded Feng for two days. The governor of P'ei marched out of the city and fought and defeated him. Then, ordering Yung Ch'ih to guard Feng, he led his troops to Hsieh. The magistrate of Ssu River, Chuang, was defeated at Hsieh and fled to Ch'i, where the governor P'ei's marshal of the left captured and killed him. The governor of P'ei returned and camped in the district of K'ang-fu, proceeding as far as Fang-yü. Chou Shih had arrived to attack Fang-yü, but had not yet engaged in battle. (Chou Shih was a man of Wei who had been sent by Ch'en She to seize the area.)

Chou Shih sent an envoy to Yung Ch'ih, who was guarding Feng, saying, "Feng was originally a colony of Liang, which was part of Wei. Now we have captured more than ten cities of Wei. If you will submit to Wei, Wei will make you a marquis. But if you persist in holding Feng and refuse to surrender, we will massacre the inhabitants."

Yung Ch'ih had originally had no desire to ally himself with the governor of P'ei and, when he was thus invited by Wei, he revolted and held the city of Feng in Wei's name. The governor of P'ei led his troops in an attack on Feng, but was unable to take it. Falling ill, he returned to P'ei.

The governor of P'ei was bitter because Yung Ch'ih and the men of Feng had turned against him. When he heard that Lord Ning of Tung-yang and Ch'in Chia had set up Ching Chü as acting king of Ch'u in Liu, he made his way there and joined them, requesting that they give him soldiers to attack Feng. At this time the Ch'in general Chang Han, pursuing Ch'en She's special general Ssu-ma I, led his troops north to pacify the region of Ch'u, massacring the inhabitants of Hsiang and marching as far as Tang. Lord Ning of Tung-yang and the governor of P'ei led their troops west and fought with him west of Hsiao, but they could win no advantage. Returning, they gathered

together their troops in Liu and led them in an attack on Tang. After three days they seized Tang and, adding to their forces some five or six thousand men captured at Tang, attacked and overcame Hsia-i. Then they returned and camped near Feng.

Hearing that Hsiang Liang was in Hsieh, the governor of P'ei, accompanied by some hundred horsemen, went to see him. Hsiang Liang gave him five thousand foot soldiers and ten generals of the rank of fifth lord. The governor of P'ei then returned and led his troops in an attack on Feng.

A month or so after the governor of P'ei had allied himself with Hsiang Liang, Hsiang Yü captured the city of Hsiang-ch'eng and returned. Hsiang Liang then summoned all his various generals to come to Hsieh. Here, having received positive news that Ch'en She was dead, he set up Hsin, grandson of the former King Huai of Ch'u, as king of Ch'u, with his capital at Hsü-i. Hsiang Liang himself took the title of lord of Wu-hsin. After several months he marched north to attack K'ang-fu, rescued the city of Tung-a, and defeated the Ch'in army. Then, while Ch'i led its troops back to its own territory, Hsiang Liang alone pursued the defeated Ch'in army north, dispatching the governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü with a special force to attack Ch'eng-yang. After massacring the inhabitants of Ch'eng-yang, they camped east of P'u-yang, where they fought with the Ch'in forces and defeated them.

The Ch'in army, recovering from this blow, defended its position at P'u-yang by encircling it with water. The Ch'u army then withdrew and attacked Ting-t'ao, but was unable to conquer it. The governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü seized the area to the west. Arriving before the walls of Yung-ch'iu, they again engaged the Ch'in forces and gravely defeated them, cutting down the Ch'in general Li Yu. They returned and attacked Wai-huang, but were unable to conquer it. Hsiang Liang in the meantime had inflicted another defeat on Ch'in and began to grow proud and boastful. Sung I cautioned him about this, but he would not listen. Ch'in then sent reinforcements to aid Chang Han. Putting gags in the mouths of his men,[5] Chang Han made a night

[5] To prevent them from talking or shouting during the surprise attack.

attack on Hsiang Liang and inflicted a crushing defeat. Hsiang Liang was killed in the battle.

The governor of P'ei and Hsiang Yü were at the time attacking Ch'en-liu but, hearing of Hsiang Liang's death, they joined forces with General Lü Ch'en and marched east. Lü Ch'en camped east of P'eng-ch'eng, Hsiang Yü to the west, and the governor of P'ei at Tang.

Chang Han, having defeated Hsiang Liang, felt that he had nothing more to worry about from the soldiers of the region of Ch'u. Therefore he crossed the Yellow River and marched north to attack Chao, inflicting a severe defeat. At this time the Ch'in general Wang Li surrounded Chao Hsieh, the king of Chao, in the city of Chü-lu. This was the so-called Army North of the River.

In the third year of the Second Emperor [207 B.C.], when King Huai of Ch'u saw that Hsiang Liang's army had been defeated, he grew fearful and moved his capital from Hsü-i to P'eng-ch'eng, where he combined the armies of Lü Ch'en and Hsiang Yü, and himself took command of the troops. He made the governor of P'ei head of Tang Province, enfeoffed him as marquis of Wu-an, and put him in command of the troops of Tang. Hsiang Yü he enfeoffed as marquis of Ch'ang-an with the title of "Duke of Lu." Lü Ch'en was appointed minister of instruction and his father, Lü Ch'ing, was made prime minister.

Since Chao had several times sent pleas for aid, King Huai made Sung I supreme general, Hsiang Yü second general, and Fan Tseng third general, and sent them north to rescue Chao. The governor of P'ei he ordered to seize the region to the west and enter the Pass, making a promise with the various leaders that whoever should enter the Pass first and conquer the area within should become king of the region.

At this time the Ch'in forces were still very strong and took advantage of their supremacy to pursue those they had defeated, so that none of the leaders of the rebellion was anxious to be the first to enter the Pass. But Hsiang Yü, embittered over the defeat of Hsiang Liang's army by Ch'in, angrily demanded to be allowed to go west with the governor of P'ei and attempt to enter the Pass.

King Huai's elder generals all advised him, saying, "Hsiang Yü is by nature extremely impetuous and cruel. When he attacked and conquered the city of Hsiang-ch'eng, he butchered every one of the inhabitants without mercy. Wherever he has passed he has left behind him destruction and death. The armies of Ch'u have several times in the past advanced and won gains, but Ch'en She and Hsiang Liang were both in the end defeated. This time it would be better to send a man of true moral worth who, relying upon righteousness, will proceed west and make a proclamation to the elders of Ch'in. The men of Ch'in have long suffered under their rulers. Now if we can send a truly worthy man who will not come to them with rapine and violence in his heart, we can surely persuade them to submit. Hsiang Yü is far too impetuous to be sent. Only the governor of P'ei, who from the first has shown himself to be a man of tolerance and moral stature, is worthy to go."

In the end King Huai refused to grant Hsiang Yü's request, but dispatched only the governor of P'ei who, gathering up the scattered remnants of Ch'en She's and Hsiang Liang's armies, marched out of Tang to seize the region to the west. Proceeding to Ch'eng-yang and Chiang-li, he threw his weight against the Ch'in fortifications there and defeated both garrisons. (In the meantime the Ch'u forces under Hsiang Yü had attacked the Ch'in general Wang Li at Chü-lu and severely defeated him.)

The governor of P'ei led his forces west and joined P'eng Yüeh at Ch'ang-i. Together they attacked the Ch'in forces but, failing to achieve a victory, retreated to Li. Here they met the marquis of Kang-wu, seized the troops under his command amounting to about four thousand men, and added them to their own forces. Then, joining the armies of the Wei general Huang Hsin and the Wei minister of works Wu P'u, they attacked Ch'ang-i again but, being unable to capture it, proceeded west past Kao-yang.

Li I-chi, the village gatekeeper,[6] remarked, "Many generals have passed through this region, but I can see that the governor of P'ei is the most magnanimous and worthy of them all." Then he requested to be allowed to meet the governor of P'ei and speak with him. At the

[6] Following the *Han shu* reading.

time the governor was sitting sprawled upon a couch with two servant girls washing his feet. When Master Li[7] entered, he did not make the customary prostration but instead gave a very deep bow and said, "If you truly desire to punish the evil rulers of Ch'in, it is hardly proper to receive one who is your elder in this slovenly fashion!"

With this the governor arose, straightened his clothes, and apologized, showing Master Li to a seat of honor. Master Li then explained to him how to assault Ch'en-liu and capture the stores of grain which Ch'in had there. The governor of P'ei gave Li I-chi the title of "Lord of Kuang-yeh" and made his brother Li Shang a general, putting him in command of the troops of Ch'en-liu. Together they attacked K'ai-feng but, failing to capture it, proceeded west and engaged the Ch'in general Yang Hsiung in battle at Po-ma and again east of Ch'ü-yung, severely defeating him. Yang Hsiung fled to Jung-yang where, in order to serve as a warning to the rest of the army, he was executed by an envoy sent from the Second Emperor.

The governor of P'ei attacked Ying-yang, massacring its defenders, and then, relying upon the guidance of Chang Liang, proceeded to seize the area of Huan-yüan in the region of Hann. At this time Ssu-ma Ang, a general dispatched by Chao, was about to cross the Yellow River in hopes of entering the Pass. In order to prevent him, the governor of P'ei marched north to attack P'ing-yin, destroyed the fording place across the Yellow River, and then continued south to battle with the Ch'in forces east of Lo-yang. Being unsuccessful here, he withdrew to Yang-ch'eng, gathered together all his horsemen, and attacked and defeated I, the governor of Nan-yang Province, east of Ch'ou. He seized the province of Nan-yang while the governor, I, fled to the city of Yüan for protection.

The governor of P'ei was about to lead his troops on to the west, but Chang Liang cautioned him, saying, "Although you wish to enter the Pass as soon as possible, there are a great many soldiers of Ch'in holding the strong points. Now if you march on without seizing the city of Yüan, Yüan will attack you from behind. With the power of Ch'in awaiting you ahead, your way will be fraught with danger!" Accordingly the governor of P'ei led his troops back by another road

[7] So called because he was a Confucian scholar.

at night, changed his flags and pennants, and just before dawn encircled the city of Yüan with several bands of troops. The governor of Nan-yang was about to cut his throat when one of his followers, Ch'en Hui, stopped him, saying, "There is still plenty of time to die." Then he climbed over the city wall and appeared before the governor of P'ei. "I have heard," he said, "that Your Lordship has made an agreement that whoever shall enter the capital city of Hsien-yang first will become its king. But now you have stayed your march in order to invest the city of Yüan. Yüan is the capital of a great province, with twenty or thirty cities under its control. Its people are numerous and its stores of provisions plentiful. Our officers believe that if they surrender they will certainly be put to death and therefore they have all mounted the walls and are firmly guarding their city. Now if you wear out your days remaining here attacking the city, many of your men are bound to suffer injury and death, while if you lead your troops away from Yüan, Yüan will surely pursue you from behind. Should you choose the former course you will never reach Hsien-yang in time to take advantage of the agreement, while should you choose the latter you will be bedeviled by the power of Yüan. If I were to suggest a plan for you, I would say it is best to promise to enfeoff the governor if he surrenders. Then you may leave him behind to guard the city for you while you lead his troops with you to the west. When the other cities that have not submitted hear of your action, they will hasten to open their gates and await your coming, so that your passage will be freed from all hindrance."

The governor of P'ei approved this idea and accordingly made the governor of Yüan marquis of Yin and enfeoffed Ch'en Hui with a thousand households. Then he led his troops west, and all the cities without exception submitted to him. When he reached the Tan River, Sai, the marquis of Kao-wu, and Wang Ling, the marquis of Hsiang, surrendered the area of Hsi-ling to him. Then he turned back and attacked Hu-yang where he met Mei Hsüan, special general of Wu Jui, the lord of P'o, and together they conquered Hsi and Li.

The governor of P'ei dispatched Ning Ch'ang, a man of Wei, as his envoy to the court of Ch'in. But he had not yet returned when Chang Han surrendered his army to Hsiang Yü at Chao. (Earlier, Hsiang Yü

and Sung I had marched north to rescue Chao from the Ch'in attack. Later, when Hsiang Yü murdered Sung I and took his place as supreme general, Ch'ing Pu and the other leaders joined with him. He then defeated the army of the Ch'in general Wang Li, received the surrender of Chang Han, and secured command over all the other leaders.)

After Chao Kao had murdered the Second Emperor, the governor of P'ei's envoy returned with a promise from Ch'in to divide the area within the Pass and make the governor a king over part of it. Believing this to be a trick, however, the governor followed the strategy suggested by Chang Liang and sent Master Li and Lu Chia to go and bargain with the Ch'in generals and tempt them to treason with offers of profit, while he himself proceeded to attack the Wu Pass and capture it. He also fought with the Ch'in armies at Lan-t'ien, disposing his soldiers and increasing the number of his flags and pennants in such a way as to make his forces appear greater than they actually were. Wherever he passed, he forbade his men to plunder or seize prisoners. The people of Ch'in were delighted at this mildness and the Ch'in armies grew unwary so that they suffered great defeat. He also fought to the north of Lan-t'ien and inflicted a major defeat. Taking advantage of these victories, he was able at last to destroy the Ch'in armies.

In the tenth month of the first year of Han [November–December, 207 B.C.] the governor of P'ei finally succeeded in reaching Pa-shang ahead of the other leaders. Tzu-ying, the king of Ch'in, came in a plain carriage drawn by a white horse, wearing a rope about his neck,[8] and surrendered the imperial seals and credentials by the side of Chih Road. Some of the generals asked that the king of Ch'in be executed, but the governor of P'ei replied, "The reason King Huai first sent me upon this mission was that he sincerely believed I was capable of showing tolerance and mercy. Now to kill a man who has already surrendered would only bring bad luck!" With this he turned the king of Ch'in over to the care of his officials. Then he proceeded west

[8] White is the color of mourning, while the rope indicated total submission. Tzu-ying had succeeded the Second Emperor as ruler of Ch'in, but because of the wobbly state of his empire had ventured only to call himself "king."

and entered Hsien-yang. He hoped to stay and rest for a while in the palaces of Ch'in, but Fan K'uai and Chang Liang advised him against this. Therefore he sealed up the storehouses containing Ch'in's treasures and wealth and returned to camp at Pa-shang. There he summoned all the distinguished and powerful men of the districts and addressed them, saying:

"Gentlemen, for a long time you have suffered beneath the harsh laws of Ch'in. Those who criticized the government were wiped out along with their families; those who gathered to talk in private were executed in the public market. I and the other nobles have made an agreement that he who first enters the Pass shall rule over the area within. Accordingly I am now king of this territory within the Pass. I hereby promise you a code of laws consisting of three articles only: He who kills anyone shall suffer death; he who wounds another or steals shall be punished according to the gravity of the offense; for the rest I hereby abolish all the laws of Ch'in. Let the officials and people remain undisturbed as before. I have come only to save you from further harm, not to exploit or tyrannize over you. Therefore do not be afraid! The reason I have returned to Pa-shang is simply to wait for the other leaders so that when they arrive we may settle the agreement."

He sent men to go with the Ch'in officials and publish this proclamation in the district towns and villages. The people of Ch'in were overjoyed and hastened with cattle, sheep, wine, and food to present to the soldiers. But the governor of P'ei declined all such gifts, saying, "There is plenty of grain in the granaries. I do not wish to be a burden to the people." With this the people were more joyful than ever and their only fear was that the governor of P'ei would not become king of Ch'in.

Someone advised the governor of P'ei, saying, "The area of Ch'in is ten times richer than the rest of the empire and the land is protected by strong natural barriers. Now word has come that Chang Han has surrendered to Hsiang Yü and that Hsiang Yü therefore has granted him the title of king of Yung, intending to make him ruler of the area within the Pass. If he arrives, I fear that you will not be able to maintain your present claim. It would be best to send soldiers at once

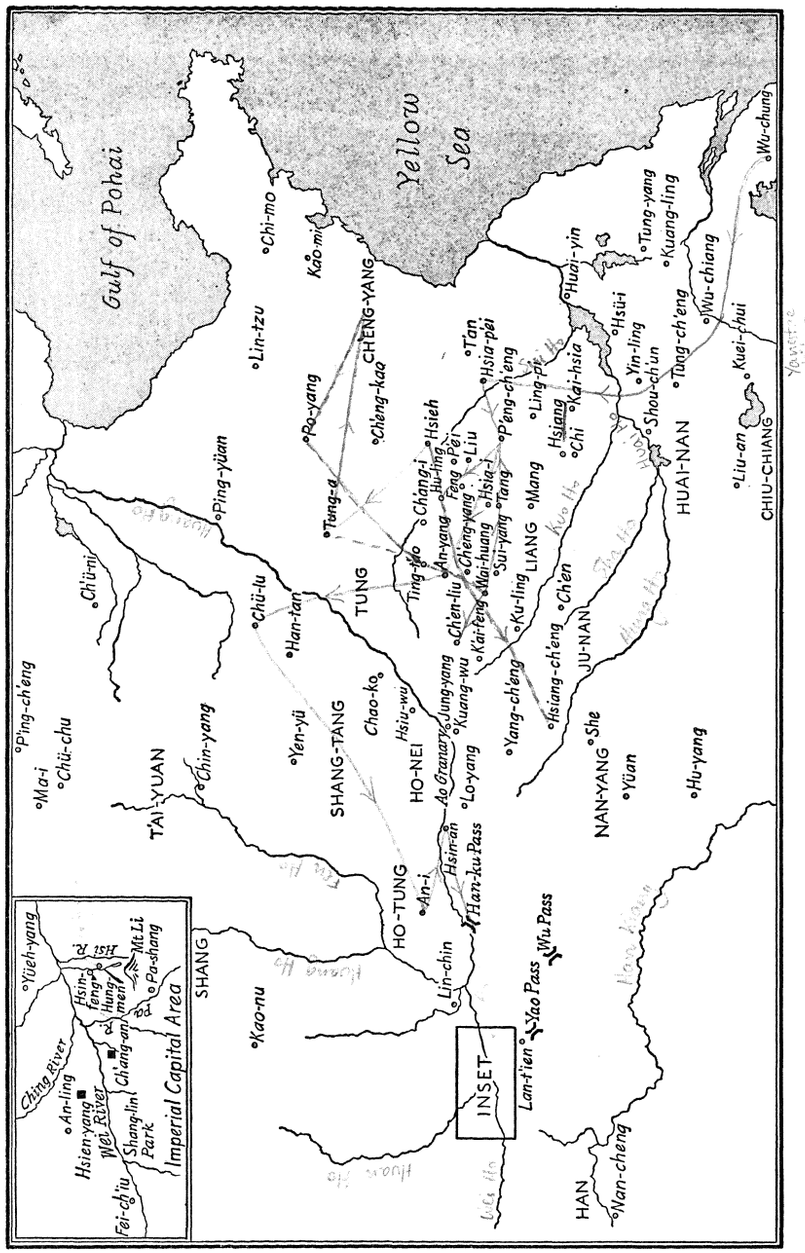
to guard the Han-ku Pass and prevent any of the armies of the other leaders from entering. In the meantime you can little by little gather up soldiers from the area within the Pass and lead them yourself to reinforce those blocking the Pass." The governor of P'ei approved this plan and set about putting it into effect.

During the eleventh month Hsiang Yü led the troops of the various armies west, as the governor had expected, and attempted to enter the Pass. Finding the Pass blocked and hearing that the governor of P'ei had already conquered the land within the Pass, he was greatly enraged and sent Ch'ing Pu and others to attack and break through the Han-ku Pass. In the twelfth month he finally reached Hsi.

Ts'ao Wu-shang, marshal of the left to the governor of P'ei, hearing that Hsiang Yü was angry and wished to attack the governor of P'ei, sent a messenger to speak to Hsiang Yü, saying, "The governor of P'ei hopes to become king of the area within the Pass, employing Tzu-ying as his prime minister and keeping possession of all the precious articles and treasures of the capital." (He thought that by reporting thus he would be rewarded by Hsiang Yü with a fief.)

Fan Tseng strongly urged Hsiang Yü to attack the governor of P'ei. Accordingly Hsiang Yü feasted his soldiers and prepared to join in battle the following day. At this time Hsiang Yü claimed to have a force of 1,000,000 men, though the actual number was 400,000, while the governor of P'ei claimed a force of 200,000, which was actually only 100,000. Thus they were no match for each other in strength.

As it happened, Hsiang Po, hoping to save the life of his friend Chang Liang, had gone the night before to see Chang Liang and as a result was able to convince Hsiang Yü of the governor of P'ei's loyalty, so that Hsiang Yü abandoned his plan to attack. The governor of P'ei, accompanied by some hundred horsemen, hastened to Hung-men, where he met Hsiang Yü and apologized to him. Hsiang Yü replied, "It is your own marshal of the left, Ts'ao Wu-shang, who informed against you. If it were not for him, how would I ever have doubted you?" The governor of P'ei, through the efforts of Fan K'uai and Chang Liang, was at last able to escape and return to his own camp. Upon his return he immediately executed Ts'ao Wu-shang.



PRINCIPAL CITIES AND AREAS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Hsiang Yü then proceeded west and massacred the inhabitants of Hsien-yang, burning the city and the palaces of Ch'in, and leaving destruction everywhere he passed. The people of Ch'in were filled with despair, but they were so terrified they had no courage to resist. Hsiang Yü sent a messenger to return and report to King Huai. "Let all be done according to the agreement," King Huai replied. Hsiang Yü was angry that the king had not allowed him to march west with the governor of P'ei and enter the Pass, but instead had sent him north to rescue Chao, thus causing him to miss out on the agreement concerning the rulership of the area within the Pass. "King Huai," he said, "was set up solely through the efforts of my uncle Hsiang Liang. He has won no merit of his own. Why should he be made arbiter of the agreement? It is the other generals and I who actually conquered the empire!" Then he pretended to honor King Huai by giving him the title of "Righteous Emperor," but in fact paid no attention to his commands.

In the first month Hsiang Yü set himself up as "Dictator King of Western Ch'u," ruling nine provinces of Liang and Ch'u, with his capital at P'eng-ch'eng. In violation of the former agreement he made the governor of P'ei king of Han instead of Ch'in, giving him the lands of Pa, Shu, and Han to rule, with his capital at Nan-cheng. The area within the Pass he divided into three parts, setting up three former generals of Ch'in: Chang Han as king of Yung with his capital at Fei-ch'iu, Ssu-ma Hsin as king of Sai with his capital at Yüeh-yang, and Tung I as king of Ti with his capital at Kao-nu. The Ch'u general Shen Yang of Hsia-ch'iu was made king of Ho-nan with his capital at Lo-yang, while the Chao general Ssu-ma Ang was made king of Yin, his capital at Chao-ko. Hsieh, the king of Chao, was transferred to the position of king of Tai, while his prime minister, Chang Erh, was made king of Ch'ang-shan with his capital at Hsiang-kuo. The lord of Tang-yang, Ch'ing Pu, was made king of Chiu-chiang, his capital at Liu; Kung Ao, chief minister to King Huai, was made king of Lin-chiang, his capital at Chiang-ling. The lord of P'o, Wu Jui, became king of Heng-shan, his capital at Chu. The Yen general Tsang Tu was made king of Yen, his capital at Chi, after the former king of Yen, Han Kuang, had been ordered to remove

to the position of king of Liao-tung. When Han Kuang refused to obey, Tsang Tu attacked and killed him at Wu-chung. Ch'en Yü, the lord of Ch'eng-an, was enfeoffed with three districts in Ho-chien, at his residence at Nan-p'i, while Mei Hsüan was enfeoffed with a hundred thousand households.

In the fourth month the various armies left the command of Hsiang Yü and proceeded with the feudal leaders to their respective territories. When the king of Han departed for his kingdom, Hsiang Yü allowed him to take along thirty thousand soldiers. Gathering a force of twenty or thirty thousand of the soldiers of Ch'u and the other leaders, he accordingly proceeded from Tu-nan and entered the Li Gorge. As he proceeded, he burned and destroyed the wooden roadway[9] behind him in order to prevent bandit troops of the other feudal lords from attacking him and, at the same time, to demonstrate to Hsiang Yü that he had no intention of marching east again.

When he reached Nan-cheng he found that many of his officers and men had deserted along the way and returned home, while those who were left all sang the songs of their homeland and longed to go back east. Han Hsin advised the king of Han, saying, "Hsiang Yü has made kings of all his generals who achieved merit, but you alone he has sent to live in Nan-cheng as though you were being exiled for some crime. The officers and soldiers of your army are all men of the east, and day and night they gaze into the distance longing to return home. If you take up your lance now and use it, you can win great glory. But if you wait until the world is settled and all men are at peace, then you cannot hope to take it up again. You had best lay plans to return east and fight for mastery of the world!"

When Hsiang Yü returned east through the Pass he sent a messenger to transfer the residence of the Righteous Emperor, announcing that "the emperors of ancient times who ruled an area a thousand miles on each side invariably resided on the upper reaches of a river." The envoy accordingly moved the Righteous Emperor to the district of Ch'en in Ch'ang-sha, pressing him to hurry on his way. With this the emperor's ministers became increasingly disillusioned and turned their backs upon him. Hsiang Yü then secretly ordered the kings of

[9] Built out over the steep side of the gorge.

Heng-shan and Lin-chiang to attack and murder the Righteous Emperor at Chiang-nan.

Hsiang Yü, being angry with T'ien Jung, set up T'ien Tu, a general of Ch'i, as king of Ch'i, but T'ien Jung, enraged at this, declared himself king of Ch'i, murdered T'ien Tu, and revolted against Ch'u. Then he presented P'eng Yüeh with the seals of office of a general and sent him to lead a revolt in the region of Liang. Ch'u ordered Chüeh, lord of Hsiao, to attack P'eng Yüeh, but P'eng Yüeh inflicted a severe defeat on him.

Ch'en Yü, angry that Hsiang Yü had not made him a king, dispatched Hsia Yüeh to plead with T'ien Jung and persuade him to send troops to attack Chang Erh, the king of Ch'ang-shan. Ch'i in response sent a body of soldiers to aid Ch'en Yü in attacking Chang Erh. Chang Erh fled from his territory and went to join the king of Han. Ch'en Yü then proceeded to Tai to fetch Hsieh, the former king of Chao, and restore him to his throne in Chao. In return, the king of Chao set up Ch'en Yü as king of Tai. Hsiang Yü, greatly enraged at these moves, marched north to attack Ch'i.

In the eighth month the king of Han, having decided to follow the plan outlined by Han Hsin, marched back by the Old Road and returned east to attack Chang Han, the king of Yung. Chang Han proceeded west to meet the attack, clashing with the Han forces at Ch'en-ts'ang. The soldiers of Yung were defeated and fled back east but halted to fight at Hao-chih. Defeated again, they fled to Fei-ch'iu. Thus the king of Han was able eventually to win control of the region of Yung and proceed east to Hsien-yang. He led his troops and surrounded the king of Yung at Fei-ch'iu, at the same time dispatching his generals to seize control of the provinces of Lung-hsi, Pei-ti, and Shang. He also ordered his generals Hsieh Ou and Wang Hsi to proceed by the Wu Pass, join the forces of Wang Ling at Nan-yang, and go to fetch his father and mother from P'ei.

When Hsiang Yü heard of this, he dispatched troops to block their march at Yang-hsia and prevent them from advancing. At the same time he made the former district magistrate of Wu, Cheng Ch'ang, king of Hann so that he could aid in blocking the Han forces.

In the second year [205 B.C.] the king of Han proceeded east, seizing

control of the land. Ssu-ma Hsin, the king of Sai; Tung I, the king of Ti; and Shen Yang, the king of Ho-nan, all surrendered to him, but Cheng Ch'ang, the king of Hann, refused to submit. Therefore he dispatched Han Hsin to attack and defeat him. Out of the land he had conquered he created the provinces of Lung-hsi, Pei-ti, Shang, Wei-nan, Ho-shang, and Chung-ti within the Pass and beyond the Pass the province of Ho-nan. He made his grand commandant Han Hsin the new king of Hann. Among his generals all those who had defeated a force of ten thousand men or captured a province were enfeoffed with ten thousand households. He then ordered the border defenses north of the Yellow River to be repaired and manned, and turned over all of Ch'in's former royal hunting parks, gardens, and lakes to the people to be converted into fields for farming. In the first month he took Chang P'ing, the younger brother of the king of Yung, prisoner. A general amnesty was declared, freeing criminals. The king of Han journeyed beyond the Pass as far as Hsia, looking after the wants of the people beyond the Pass. On his return, Chang Erh came to see him and the king of Han received him with kindness and generosity.

In the second month the king of Han gave orders for Ch'in's altars of the soil and grain to be abolished, and the altars of Han set up in their place.

In the third month the king of Han proceeded through Lin-chin and crossed the Yellow River, where Pao, the king of Wei, led his troops to join him. He conquered Ho-nei and took Ssu-ma Ang, the king of Yin, prisoner, making his territory into the province of Ho-nei. Proceeding south, he crossed the Yellow River at the P'ing-yin Ford and reached Lo-yang. Here Lord Tung, the elder of Hsin-ch'eng,[10] intercepted him and informed him of the death of the Righteous Emperor. When he heard this the king of Han bared his arms and lamented loudly. He then proclaimed a period of mourning for the sake of the emperor, with three days of lamentation, and dispatched envoys to report to the other nobles, saying, "The people of the world have joined together in setting up the Righteous Emperor and serving him as their sovereign. But now Hsiang Yü has banished him from

[10] The "elders" or *san-lao* were distinguished men over fifty chosen from among the common people to act as consultants to government officials.

his throne and murdered him at Chiang-nan. This is a most treasonable and heinous offense! I myself have proclaimed mourning on his behalf, and I trust the other lords will join me in donning the plain white garments of sorrow. Then I shall lead forth all the troops of the area within the Pass, gather together the forces of the three lands along the river, and in the south descend by the Han and Yangtze rivers, begging to join with the other lords and kings in attacking him of Ch'u who is the murderer of the Righteous Emperor!"

At this time Hsiang Yü had marched north to attack Ch'i, fighting with T'ien Jung at Ch'eng-yang. T'ien Jung was defeated and fled to P'ing-yüan, where the people of P'ing-yüan killed him, and with this all of Ch'i surrendered to the forces of Ch'u. But Hsiang Yü burned its cities and fortifications and enslaved its women and children until the men of Ch'i once more rose up in revolt. T'ien Jung's younger brother, T'ien Heng, set up T'ien Jung's son Kuang as king of Ch'i, holding the area of Ch'eng-yang in revolt against Ch'u.

Although Hsiang Yü had received word of the king of Han's march to the east, he was already engaged in a struggle with the forces of Ch'i and hoped to accomplish their defeat before proceeding to attack Han. For this reason the king of Han was able to commandeer the troops of five of the feudal lords and eventually enter the city of P'eng-ch'eng. When Hsiang Yü received news of this, he led his forces back from Ch'i, marching from Lu through Hu-ling as far as Hsiao, where he engaged the king of Han in a great battle at P'eng-ch'eng and east of Ling-pi on the Sui River, inflicting a severe defeat. So many of the Han officers and men were killed that the Sui River was blocked and ceased to flow. Then Hsiang Yü seized the parents, wife, and children of the king of Han at P'ei and placed them under guard in the midst of his army as hostages.

At this time, when the other nobles saw that the Ch'u forces were very strong and the Han forces were retreating in defeat, they all deserted Han and went over again to the side of Ch'u. Ssu-ma Hsin, the king of Sai, fled to Ch'u. The older brother of the king of Han's wife, Lü Tse, the marquis of Chou-lü, commanded a force of Han soldiers at Hsia-i, and the king of Han, joining him, gradually managed to gather together his soldiers and form an army at Tang. He

then marched west through the territory of Liang as far as Yü. There he dispatched Sui Ho, his master of guests, as an envoy to go to the residence of Ch'ing Pu, the king of Chiu-chiang, telling him, "If you can persuade Ch'ing Pu to raise an army and revolt against Ch'u, Hsiang Yü will be bound to halt his advance and attack him. If I can get Hsiang Yü to delay for a few months, I will surely be able to seize control of the empire!" Sui Ho went and pleaded with Ch'ing Pu, who as a result revolted against Ch'u. With this, Hsiang Yü dispatched Lung Chü to go and attack him.

When the king of Han was marching west after his defeat at P'eng-ch'eng, he sent someone to look for the members of his family, but they had in the meantime all fled and he could not find them. After his defeat he was able to locate only his son (later Emperor Hui). In the sixth month he set up his son as heir apparent, proclaiming a general amnesty, and left him to guard the city of Yüeh-yang. All the relatives of the feudal lords in the area within the Pass gathered in Yüeh-yang to act as the heir apparent's bodyguards. Then the king of Han dug canals and flooded the city of Fei-ch'iu. Fei-ch'iu surrendered and its king, Chang Han, committed suicide. The king of Han changed the name of the city to Huai-li. At this time he ordered the officials in charge of religious ceremonies to perform sacrifices to heaven and earth, the four directions, the Lord on High, and the various mountains and rivers, all to be celebrated at the due seasons. He raised a force of soldiers from the area within the Pass to man the various fortifications.

At this time Ch'ing Pu, the king of Chiu-chiang, was fighting with Lung Chü but, failing to gain a victory, he proceeded with Sui Ho by a secret route and joined the forces of Han. The king of Han gradually recruited more soldiers and, with the other generals and the troops from within the Pass, little by little advanced. Thus he was able to muster a great force at Jung-yang and defeat the Ch'u army in the area of So in Ching.

In the third year [204 B.C.] Wei Pao, the king of Wei, begged leave to return to his home and look after his ailing parents but, when he had reached his destination, he cut off the ford across the Yellow River, revolted against Han, and declared himself in alliance with

Ch'u. The king of Han sent Master Li I-chi to persuade him to reconsider, but Wei Pao refused to listen. The king then dispatched his general Han Hsin, who inflicted a decisive defeat and took Wei Pao prisoner. Thus the king of Han managed to conquer the region of Wei, which he made into three provinces, Ho-tung, T'ai-yüan, and Shang-tang. He ordered Chang Erh and Han Hsin to proceed east down the Ching Gorge and attack Chao, where they executed Ch'en Yü and Hsieh, the king of Chao. The following year Chang Erh was made king of Chao.

The king of Han camped south of Jung-yang and constructed a walled supply road following along the banks of the Yellow River in order to transport grain from the Ao Granary. Here he and Hsiang Yü remained at an impasse for well over a year.

Hsiang Yü had several times attacked and cut off the Han supply road, and the Han army was growing very short of provisions. Finally Hsiang Yü succeeded in surrounding the king of Han, who made a bid for peace, suggesting that they divide the empire in two, he himself to retain all the land west of Jung-yang as part of Han. When Hsiang Yü refused to consent to this, the king of Han was much distressed but, following a plan suggested by Ch'en P'ing, he gave Ch'en P'ing a sum of forty thousand catties of gold to use as bribes in causing dissension between the leaders of Ch'u. As a result Hsiang Yü began to doubt his aide, Fan Tseng. Fan Tseng at the time was urging Hsiang Yü to carry through the assault on Jung-yang but, when he found that his loyalty was doubted, he grew angry and begged leave to retire, requesting that he be relieved of his duties and returned to the ranks of a common soldier. His request was granted and he departed, but died before he reached P'eng-ch'eng.

The Han army had by this time run completely out of food. The king of Han dressed some two thousand women in armor and sent them out at night from the eastern gate of Jung-yang. When the Ch'u forces flocked from all directions to attack them, the Han general Chi Hsin, in order to deceive Ch'u, rode forth in the royal chariot, pretending to be the king of Han. With shouts of victory, the men of Ch'u all rushed to the eastern side of the city walls to see him. In this way the king of Han, accompanied by twenty or thirty horsemen, was

able to slip out by the western gate and flee, leaving the grand secretary Chou K'o, Wei Pao, the former king of Wei, and Lord Ts'ung to guard Jung-yang. The other generals and their men who had been unable to accompany the king all remained within the city. Chou K'o and Lord Ts'ung, agreeing with each other that it would be difficult to guard the city with the king of a country that had once revolted, proceeded to murder Wei Pao.

After the king of Han escaped from Jung-yang he retired within the Pass and gathered together more troops, hoping once more to march east. Master Yüan advised the king, saying, "While Han and Ch'u remained in stalemate at Jung-yang for several years, our men were in constant difficulty. I beg you this time to go out by the Wu Pass. Hsiang Yü will surely hasten south with his troops to meet you, and you may then take refuge behind heavy fortifications. In this way you can relieve the pressure on the men at Jung-yang and Ch'eng-kao, in the meantime sending Han Hsin and others to gather forces in Ho-pei and the region of Chao and to form an alliance with Yen and Ch'i. Then, if you should again march upon Jung-yang, it would still not be too late. Thus Ch'u will be obliged to guard a number of points and its strength will be divided, while the Han forces, having had time to rest before engaging in battle again, will certainly defeat Ch'u."

The king of Han, adopting this plan, proceeded with his army to the area between Yüan and She, he and Ch'ing Pu gathering troops as they went along. When Hsiang Yü heard that the king of Han was in Yüan, he led his forces south as had been expected, but the king of Han remained within his fortifications and would not engage in battle. At this time P'eng Yüeh crossed the Sui River and fought with the Ch'u general Hsiang Sheng and the lord of Hsieh at Hsia-p'ei, defeating their army. Hsiang Yü then led his troops east to attack P'eng Yüeh, while the king of Han in the meantime marched north and camped at Ch'eng-kao.

After Hsiang Yü had defeated P'eng Yüeh and put him to flight, he received news that the king of Han had moved his camp to Ch'eng-kao. He accordingly led his troops back west and seized Jung-yang, executing Chou K'o and Lord Ts'ung and taking Hsin, the king of Hann, prisoner, and then proceeded to surround Ch'eng-kao. The

king of Han fled, accompanied only by Lord T'eng in a single carriage, escaping by the Jade Gate of the city of Ch'eng-kao.

Hastening north across the Yellow River, he stopped for a night at Little Hsiu-wu and at dawn the next day, pretending to be an envoy from the king of Han, hurriedly entered the fortifications of Chang Erh and Han Hsin and seized command of their armies. He at once dispatched Chang Erh to proceed north and gather more troops in the region of Chao and sent Han Hsin east to attack Ch'i.

Having gained command of Han Hsin's army and recovered his strength, the king of Han led his troops to the edge of the Yellow River and camped south of Little Hsiu-wu, facing south across the river. He intended to proceed once more to battle, but his attendant Cheng Chung advised him not to fight but instead to fortify his position with high walls and deep moats. The king followed this advice, sending Lu Wan and Liu Chia to lead a force of twenty thousand infantry and several hundred horsemen across the Yellow River at the White Horse Ford to invade Ch'u. They joined P'eng Yüeh in attacking and defeating the Ch'u army west of Yen-kuo, and then proceeded to seize control of ten or more cities in the region of Liang.

Han Hsin had already been ordered to march east but had not yet crossed the P'ing-yüan Ford when the king of Han dispatched Master Li I-chi to go to Ch'i and plead for him with T'ien Kuang, the king of Ch'i. As a result T'ien Kuang revolted against Ch'u and joined in alliance with Han, agreeing to participate in an attack on Hsiang Yü. But Han Hsin, following the advice of K'uai T'ung, proceeded to attack Ch'i in spite of this, inflicting a defeat. The king of Ch'i boiled Master Li I-chi alive for his supposed treachery and marched east to Kao-mi.

When Hsiang Yü heard that Han Hsin had already raised a force of troops north of the river, defeated Ch'i and Chao, and was about to attack Ch'u, he dispatched Lung Chü and Chou Lan to attack him. Han Hsin, aided in battle by the cavalry general Kuan Ying, attacked them and defeated the Ch'u army, killing Lung Chü. T'ien Kuang, the king of Ch'i, fled to join P'eng Yüeh. At this time P'eng Yüeh was in the region of Liang, leading his troops back and forth, harassing the Ch'u forces and cutting off their supplies of food.

In the fourth year [203 B.C.] Hsiang Yü said to the marquis of Hai-ch'un, the grand marshal Ts'ao Chiu, "Hold fast to the city of Ch'eng-kao. Even if the king of Han challenges you to a battle, take care and do not fight with him. By no means let him advance to the east. In fifteen days I will be able to bring the region of Liang under control, and then I will join you again." He then proceeded to attack and subdue Ch'en-liu, Wai-huang, and Sui-yang.

As Hsiang Yü had foreseen, the king of Han several times challenged the Ch'u armies to battle, but they refused to take up the challenge. Then the king of Han sent men to insult and revile them for five or six days, until the grand marshal in anger led his troops across the Ssu River. When the soldiers were halfway across the river the Han forces fell upon them, inflicting a crushing defeat on Ch'u and seizing all the gold, treasures, and wealth of the kingdom of Ch'u. The grand marshal Ts'ao Chiu and Ssu-ma Hsin, the king of Sai,[11] both committed suicide by cutting their throats on the banks of the Ssu.

When Hsiang Yü reached Sui-yang he received word of Ts'ao Chiu's defeat and led his forces back. The Han forces had at the time encircled Chung-li Mo at Jung-yang, but on Hsiang Yü's arrival they all fled to the safety of the mountains.

After Han Hsin had defeated Ch'i he sent someone to report to the king of Han, saying, "Ch'i lies directly upon the border of Ch'u and my grip upon it is still unsure. I fear that unless I am given the title of acting king I will not be able to hold the area."

The king of Han was in favor of attacking Han Hsin, but Chang Liang said, "It is better to comply with his request and make him a king so that he will guard the area in his own interest." The king of Han accordingly dispatched Chang Liang to present the seals and cords of authority, setting up Han Hsin as king of Ch'i. When Hsiang Yü heard that Han Hsin had defeated Lung Chü's army, he was very much afraid and sent Wu She, a man of Hsü-i, to attempt to bargain with Han Hsin, but Han Hsin would not listen to his arguments.

For a long while Ch'u and Han held their respective positions and

[11] Both here and in the corresponding passage in "The Annals of Hsiang Yü" there seems to be considerable confusion of names and titles. I have translated in accordance with suggested emendations.

made no decisive move, while their fighting men suffered the hardships of camp life and their old men and boys wore themselves out transporting provisions. The king of Han and Hsiang Yü faced each other across the ravine of Kuang-wu and talked back and forth. Hsiang Yü challenged the king of Han to meet him in single combat, but the king berated Hsiang Yü, saying, "When you and I bowed together before the command of King Huai, we agreed that whoever should enter the Pass first and conquer the land within should become its king. But you went back on this agreement, making me king of Shu and Han instead. This was your first crime. Feigning orders from King Huai, you murdered his lordship Sung I, the commander of the army, and elevated yourself to his position. This was your second crime. After you had gone to rescue Chao, it was proper that you should have returned and made your report to King Huai, but instead you wantonly seized the troops of the other leaders and entered the Pass. This was your third crime. King Huai had promised that whoever entered the Pass would commit no violence or theft. Yet you fired the palaces of Ch'in, desecrated the grave of the First Emperor, and appropriated the wealth and goods of Ch'in for your private use. This was your fourth crime. You inflicted violent death upon Tzu-ying, the king of Ch'in, who had already surrendered; this was your fifth crime. At Hsin-an you butchered two hundred thousand of the sons of Ch'in whom you had tricked into surrender and made their general, Chang Han, a king; this was your sixth crime. You enfeoffed all your generals as kings in the best lands and transferred or exiled the former kings, setting their subjects to strife and rebellion; this was your seventh crime. You drove the Righteous Emperor from P'eng-ch'eng and set up your own capital there, seized the territory of the king of Hann and made yourself ruler of the combined areas of Liang and Ch'u, appropriating all for yourself. This was your eighth crime. You sent a man in secret to assassinate the Righteous Emperor at Chiang-nan, your ninth crime. As a subject you have assassinated your sovereign; you have murdered those who had already surrendered, administered your rule unjustly, and broken faith with the agreement that you made. You are guilty of such heinous treason as the world cannot forgive. This is your tenth crime. I and my soldiers of righteousness have

joined with the other nobles to punish tyranny and rebellion. I have plenty of criminals and exconvicts that I can send to attack and kill you. Why should I go to the trouble of engaging in combat with you myself?"

Hsiang Yü was enraged and, with a crossbow that he had concealed, shot and hit the king of Han. The king was wounded in the breast, but he seized his foot and cried, "The scoundrel has hit me in the toe!" [12]

The king lay ill of his wound, but Chang Liang begged him to get up and walk about the camp in order to comfort and reassure his officers and men so that Ch'u would not be able to profit from its advantage. The king of Han went out and walked about his camp, but when the pain became too great he hurried into the city of Ch'eng-kao. After his wound had healed, he retired west through the Pass until he reached Yüeh-yang, where he held a feast for the elders of the city and set out wine for them. Then he had the head of the former king of Sai, Ssu-ma Hsin, exposed in the market place of his old capital, Yüeh-yang. After staying for four days the king returned to his army, which was still camped at Wu-kuang. A number of reinforcements of troops arrived from within the Pass.

At this time P'eng Yüeh was in the region of Liang, leading his troops back and forth, harassing the Ch'u forces and cutting off their supplies of food. T'ien Heng fled and joined him there. Hsiang Yü had several times attacked P'eng Yüeh and the others when Han Hsin, the new king of Ch'i, appeared and began to attack Ch'u as well. Hsiang Yü became fearful and made an agreement with the king of Han to divide the empire, all the territory west of the Hung Canal to belong to Han and all that east of the canal to belong to Ch'u. Hsiang Yü returned the king of Han's parents, wife, and children to him, amid cheers of welcome from the whole army of Han. Then the two leaders parted, and Hsiang Yü broke camp and started back east.

The king of Han was about to lead his forces west but, on the advice of Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing, instead marched forward, sending his troops to pursue Hsiang Yü. When he reached the south of Yang-hsia, he stopped and made camp. He arranged with Han Hsin

[12] So that his men would not perceive the seriousness of his wound.

and P'eng Yüeh to meet on a certain date and join in an attack on Ch'u. But when he reached Ku-ling, they failed to appear for the meeting and Ch'u attacked Han, inflicting a grave defeat. The king of Han again withdrew behind his fortifications, deepened his moats, and guarded his position. Using a plan suggested by Chang Liang, he was finally able to induce Han Hsin and P'eng Yüeh to join him. Liu Chia also invaded Ch'u and surrounded Shou-ch'un. When the king of Han was defeated at Ku-ling, he sent an envoy to invite the grand marshal of Ch'u, Chou Yin, to revolt. Accordingly Chou Yin raised the forces of Chiu-chiang and marched to join Liu Chia and Ch'ing Pu, the king of Wu, in massacring the inhabitants of Ch'eng-fu. Following Liu Chia, he and the leaders of Ch'i and Liang all joined in a general meeting at Kai-hsia, at which Ch'ing Pu was made king of Huai-nan.

In the fifth year [202 B.C.] the king of Han with the forces of the other leaders joined in an attack on the army of Ch'u, fighting with Hsiang Yü for a decisive victory at Kai-hsia. Han Hsin led a force of three hundred thousand to attack in the center, with General K'ung leading the left flank and General Pi leading the right flank, while the king of Han followed behind. Chou P'o, the marquis of Chiang, and General Ch'ai followed behind the king. Hsiang Yü's troops numbered some one hundred thousand. Han Hsin advanced and joined in combat but, failing to gain the advantage, retired and allowed General K'ung and General Pi to close in from the sides. When the Ch'u forces began to falter, Han Hsin took advantage of their weakness to inflict a great defeat at Kai-hsia. The soldiers of Hsiang Yü, hearing the Han armies singing the songs of Ch'u, concluded that Han had already conquered the whole land of Ch'u. With this, Hsiang Yü fled in despair, leaving his soldiers to suffer total defeat. The king of Han dispatched his cavalry general Kuan Ying to pursue and kill Hsiang Yü at Tung-ch'eng. After cutting off the heads of eighty thousand of the enemy, he overran and conquered the land of Ch'u.

Lu held out on behalf of Hsiang Yü and refused to surrender but, when the king of Han led the forces of the various nobles north and displayed the head of Hsiang Yü before the elders of Lu, they finally

capitulated. The king of Han buried Hsiang Yü at Ku-ch'eng with the title of "Duke of Lu." He then returned to Ting-t'ao, hastily entered the fortifications of Han Hsin, the king of Ch'i, and seized control of his army.

In the first month the various nobles and generals all joined in begging the king of Han to take the title of emperor, but he replied, "I have heard that the position of emperor may go only to a worthy man. It cannot be claimed by empty words and vain talk. I do not dare to accept the position of emperor."

His followers all replied, "Our great king has risen from the humblest beginnings to punish the wicked and violent and bring peace to all within the four seas. To those who have achieved merit he has accordingly parceled out land and enfeoffed them as kings and marquises. If our king does not assume the supreme title, then all our titles as well will be called into doubt. On pain of death we urge our request!"

The king of Han three times declined and then, seeing that he could do no more, said, "If you, my lords, consider it a good thing, then it must be to the good of the country." On the day *chia-wu*[13] [Feb. 28, 202 B.C.] he assumed the position of Supreme Emperor on the north banks of the Ssu River.

The Supreme Emperor declared, "The Righteous Emperor of Ch'u was without an heir, but Han Hsin, king of Ch'i, is well acquainted with the customs and ways of Ch'u." Accordingly he transferred Han Hsin to the position of king of Ch'u with his capital at Hsia-p'ei. Hsin, the former king of Hann, was confirmed in his title, with his capital at Yang-ti. P'eng Yüeh, the marquis of Chien-ch'eng, was made king of Liang, with his capital at Ting-t'ao; Wu Jui, the king of Heng-shan, was transferred to the position of king of Ch'ang-sha, his capital at Lin-hsiang. (Wu Jui's general, Mei Hsüan, had won merit in battle, while he himself had joined in the march through the Wu Pass, and therefore he was rewarded in this fashion.) Ch'ing Pu, the king of Huai-nan; Tsang Tu, the king of Yen; and Chang Ao,[14] the king of Chao, remained in their former positions. With the entire empire now

[13] To indicate days the Chinese employ a series of signs, the so-called ten stems and twelve branches, which combine to form sixty designations used to name the days (and in some cases the years) of a sixty-day or -year cycle.

[14] Chang Ao succeeded his father, Chang Erh, who had died this year.

at peace, Kao-tsu[15] made his capital at Lo-yang, where all the nobles acknowledged his sovereignty. Huan,[16] the former king of Lin-chiang, had in the name of Hsiang Yü revolted against Han, but Lu Wan and Liu Chia were sent to surround him and, though he held out for several months, he was eventually forced to surrender and was killed at Lo-yang.

In the fifth month the armies were disbanded and the soldiers returned to their homes. The relatives of the feudal lords who remained in the area within the Pass were exempted from all taxes and services for twelve years, while those who returned to their territories were exempted for six years and granted stipends of food for a year. Kao-tsu gave a banquet for the nobles in the Southern Palace of Lo-yang and announced, "My lords and generals, I ask you all to speak your minds quite frankly without daring to hide anything from me. Why is it that I won possession of the world and Hsiang Yü lost?"

Kao Ch'i and Wang Ling replied, "Your Majesty is arrogant and insulting to others, while Hsiang Yü was kind and loving. But when you send someone to attack a city or seize a region, you award him the spoils of the victory, sharing your gains with the whole world. Hsiang Yü was jealous of worth and ability, hating those who had achieved merit and suspecting anyone who displayed his wisdom. No matter what victories were achieved in battle, he gave his men no reward; no matter what lands they won, he never shared with them the spoils. This is why he lost possession of the world."

Kao-tsu said, "You have understood the first reason, but you do not know the second. When it comes to sitting within the tents of command and devising strategies that will assure us victory a thousand miles away, I am no match for Chang Liang. In ordering the state and caring for the people, in providing rations for the troops and seeing to it that the lines of supply are not cut off, I cannot compare to Hsiao Ho. In leading an army of a million men, achieving success with every battle and victory with every attack, I cannot come up to Han Hsin. These three are all men of extraordinary ability, and it

[15] From now on Liu Chi is called by his posthumous title, Kao-tsu, or "Exalted Ancestor."

[16] Probably a mistake for Kung Wei, who succeeded his father, Kung Ao, as king of Lin-chiang.

is because I was able to make use of them that I gained possession of the world. Hsiang Yü had his one Fan Tseng, but he did not know how to use him and thus he ended as my prisoner."

Kao-tsu wished to continue to make his capital at Lo-yang, but Liu Ching, a man of Ch'i, advised him against this and Chang Liang likewise urged him to establish his capital within the Pass. Accordingly on the same day Kao-tsu mounted his carriage and entered the Pass to take up residence there. In the sixth month he proclaimed a general amnesty for the empire.

In the seventh month Tsang Tu, the king of Yen, revolted, invading and seizing control of the land of Tai. Kao-tsu himself led a force to attack and capture him. He proceeded to set up the grand commandant Lu Wan as the new king of Yen, sending Fan K'uai with a force of troops to attack Tai.

In the autumn Li Chi revolted. Kao-tsu again led the troops in person to attack him, whereupon Li Chi fled. (Li Chi had originally been a general of the Hsiang family. When the Hsiangs were defeated, Li Chi, then the governor of the district of Ch'en, revoked his allegiance to the Hsiangs and fled and surrendered to Kao-tsu. Kao-tsu made him marquis of Ying-ch'uan. When Kao-tsu arrived in Lo-yang, he summoned to court all the marquises whose titles had thus far been registered, but Li Chi, misinterpreting the summons and fearing punishment for his former connection with the Hsiangs, revolted.)

The sixth year [201 B.C.]: Every five days Kao-tsu would go to visit his father, the "Venerable Sire," observing the etiquette proper for an ordinary son towards his father. The steward of his father's household spoke to the Venerable Sire, saying, "As heaven is without two suns, so the earth has not two lords. Now although the emperor is your son, he is the ruler of men, and although you are his father, you are his subject as well. How does it happen then that the ruler of men is doing obeisance to one of his subjects? If this is allowed to continue, the emperor's majesty will never prevail upon the world!"

The next time Kao-tsu came to visit, his father, bearing a broom in his hands as a sign of servitude, went to the gate to greet him and stood respectfully to one side. Kao-tsu in great astonishment descended from his carriage and hastened to his father's side. "The emperor is

the ruler of men," his father said. "How should he on my account violate the laws of the empire?" With this Kao-tsu honored his father with the title of "Grand Supreme Emperor" and, because he was secretly pleased with the advice of his father's steward, he awarded the man five hundred catties of gold.

In the twelfth month someone reported a case of disaffection to the emperor, announcing that Han Hsin, the king of Ch'u, was plotting a revolt. When the emperor consulted his advisers, they all urged him to attack but, rejecting this advice, he instead employed a strategy suggested by Ch'en P'ing whereby, pretending to embark upon a pleasure visit to Yün-meng, he summoned the various feudal lords to a meeting at Ch'en. When Han Hsin appeared at the meeting, Kao-tsu immediately seized him. The same day he proclaimed a general amnesty to the empire.

T'ien K'en congratulated the emperor upon his success, saying, "Your Majesty has succeeded in seizing Han Hsin, and also fixed the capital in the area of Ch'in within the Pass. The land of Ch'in is of superlative configuration, surrounded by natural barriers of rivers and mountains and stretching a thousand miles. He who commands an army of a million lances commands a hundred times that number if he holds the land of Ch'in. From such an advantageous stronghold, sending forth troops to subdue the feudal lords is as easy as standing on a roof and pouring down water from a jug. But the land of Ch'i too has its rich fields of Lang ya and Chi-mo in the east, the fastnesses of Mount T'ai to the south, in the west the banks of the muddy Yellow River, and in the north the resources of the Gulf of Pohai. Its land stretches for two thousand miles. He who commands an army of a million lances in this vast area commands ten times that number when he holds the land of Ch'i. Therefore there is a Ch'in in the east as well as in the west. Only one of the emperor's sons or brothers is fit to be made king of Ch'i."

Kao-tsu approved his words and rewarded him with five hundred catties of yellow gold. Ten or so days later he enfeoffed Han Hsin as marquis of Huai-yin. Han Hsin's original fief he divided into two kingdoms. Because General Liu Chia had several times achieved merit, he enfeoffed him as king of Ching ruling over one of them,

the area of Huai-tung; he made his younger brother Liu Chiao king of Ch'u ruling over the other, the area of Huai-hsi. His own son Liu Fei he made king of Ch'i, ruling over more than seventy cities of Ch'i; all the people who spoke the dialect of Ch'i were to belong to the fief of Ch'i. The emperor held debates upon the merits of his followers and presented to the various feudal lords the split tallies, symbols of their formal enfeoffment. He transferred Hsin, the king of Hann, to the region of T'ai-yüan.

In the seventh year [200 B.C.] the Hsiung-nu[17] attacked Hsin, the king of Hann, at Ma-i. Hsin joined with them in plotting a revolt in T'ai-yüan. His generals, Man-ch'iu Ch'en of Po-t'u and Wang Huang, set up Chao Li, a descendant of the royal family of Chao,[18] as king of Chao in revolt against the emperor. Kao-tsu in person led a force to attack them, but he encountered such severe cold that two or three out of every ten of his soldiers lost their fingers from frostbite. At last he reached P'ing-ch'eng, where the Hsiung-nu surrounded him. After seven days of siege they finally withdrew. Kao-tsu ordered Fan K'uai to remain behind and subdue the region of Tai, and set up his older brother Liu Chung as king of Tai.

In the second month Kao-tsu passed through Chao and Lo-yang and returned to the capital at Ch'ang-an. With the completion of the Palace of Lasting Joy, the prime minister and subordinate officials all moved and took up residence in Ch'ang-an.

Eighth year [199 B.C.]: Kao-tsu marched east and attacked the remnants of the king of Hann's revolutionaries at Tung-yüan. The prime minister Hsiao Ho had been put in charge of the building of the Eternal Palace, constructing eastern and western gate towers, a front hall, an arsenal, and a great storehouse. When Kao-tsu returned from his expedition and saw the magnificence of the palace and its towers, he was extremely angry. "The empire is still in great turmoil," he said to Hsiao Ho, "and though we have toiled in battle these several years, we cannot tell yet whether we will achieve final success. What do you mean by constructing palaces like this on such an extravagant scale?"

[17] See note 11, "The Hereditary House of Ch'en She."
[18] Following the *Han shu* reading.

Hsiao Ho replied, "It is precisely because the fate of the empire is still uncertain that we must build such palaces and halls. A true Son of Heaven takes the whole world within the four seas to be his family. If he does not dwell in magnificence and beauty, he will have no way to manifest his authority, nor will he leave any foundation for his heirs to build upon." With these words, Kao-tsu's anger turned to delight.

When Kao-tsu was on his way to Tung-yüan he passed through a place called Po-jen. The prime minister of Chao, Kuan Kao, and others were at this time plotting to assassinate Kao-tsu, but when Kao-tsu heard the name of the place he grew uneasy in his heart and proceeded on without stopping.[19]

Liu Chung, the king of Tai, fled from his kingdom and returned to Lo-yang. Accordingly he was deprived of his title and made marquis of Ho-yang.

Ninth year [198 B.C.]: The plot of Kuan Kao and others to assassinate the emperor came to light, and they were executed along with their three sets of relatives.[20] Chang Ao, the king of Chao, was removed from his position and made marquis of Hsüan-p'ing. In this year the Chao, Ch'ü, Ching, and Huai families of Ch'u and the T'ien family of Ch'i, all powerful noble clans, were moved to the area within the Pass.[21]

When the Eternal Palace was completed, Kao-tsu summoned the nobles and officials to a great reception, setting forth wine for them in the front hall of the palace. Kao-tsu rose and, lifting his jade cup, proposed a toast to his father, the Grand Supreme Emperor. "You, my father, always used to consider me a worthless fellow who could never look after the family fortunes and had not half the industry of my older brother Chung," he said. "Now that my labors are com-

[19] Because the name "Po-jen" suggested to him the phrase "po yü jen" (to be pursued by someone).
[20] There is disagreement on the exact meaning of the term "three sets of relatives," but it is certain that, because of the principle of corporate responsibility recognized in Chinese law, the parents and the other members of a criminal's immediate family were executed along with him. One reason was to prevent the possibility of blood revenge.
[21] So that the emperor could keep a closer watch on them.

pleted, which of us has accomplished more, Chung or I?" All the officials in the hall shouted "Long life!" and roared with merriment.

In the tenth month of the tenth year [197 B.C.] Ch'ing Pu, the king of Huai-nan; P'eng Yüeh, the king of Liang; Lu Wan, the king of Yen; Liu Chia, the king of Ching; Liu Chiao, the king of Ch'u; Liu Fei, the king of Ch'i; and Wu Jui, the king of Ch'ang-sha, all came to pay homage at the Palace of Lasting Joy. The spring and summer passed without incident. In the seventh month [22] the Grand Supreme Emperor, father of Kao-tsu, passed away in the palace of Yüeh-yang. The kings of Ch'u and Liang came to attend the funeral. All prisoners in the district of Yüeh-yang were freed and the name of the city of Li-i was changed to "New Feng."

In the eighth month Ch'en Hsi, prime minister of the kingdom of Tai, started a revolt in the region of Tai.[23] "Ch'en Hsi," said the emperor, "formerly acted as my envoy, and I had the deepest faith in him. Tai is a region of crucial importance to me, and therefore I enfeoffed Ch'en Hsi as a marquis and made him prime minister of the kingdom so that he could guard Tai for me. But now he has joined with Wang Huang and the rest in plundering the land of Tai. The officials and people of Tai, however, are not to blame for this and therefore I absolve them of all guilt."

In the ninth month the emperor marched east to attack the rebels. When he reached Han-tan he announced with joy, "Since Ch'en Hsi has not come south to occupy Han-tan and guard the frontier of the Chang River, I am confident he will never be able to do me much harm." When he heard that all of Ch'en Hsi's generals had formerly been merchants he remarked, "I know how to take care of them." Then he offered large sums of money to tempt them to desert, so that most of Ch'en Hsi's generals surrendered to him.

Eleventh year [196 B.C.]: While Kao-tsu was still in Han-tan engaged in putting down the revolt of Ch'en Hsi and his followers, one of Ch'en's generals, Hou Ch'ang, with a band of some ten thousand men roamed from place to place, while Wang Huang camped at Ch'ü-ni

[22] See note 2, "The Hereditary House of Ch'en She."
[23] The text erroneously reads "prime minister of Chao."

and Chang Ch'un crossed the Yellow River and attacked Liao-ch'eng. Kao-tsu dispatched his general Kuo Meng to join with the general of Ch'i in attacking them, inflicting a decisive defeat. The grand commandant Chou P'o marched by way of T'ai-yüan into the region of Tai, conquering the area as far as Ma-i. When Ma-i refused to surrender, he attacked it and massacred its defenders. Kao-tsu attacked Tung-yüan, which was being held by Ch'en Hsi's general Chao Li. The city held out for over a month, while its men cursed the emperor. When the city finally capitulated, Kao-tsu had all those who had cursed him dragged forth and beheaded, while those who had not joined in cursing him he pardoned. With this, he took from Chao the land north of the Ch'ang Mountains and assigned it to Tai, setting up his son Liu Heng as king of Tai with his capital at Chin-yang.

In the spring Han Hsin, the marquis of Huai-yin, plotted a revolt in the area within the Pass. He was executed with his three sets of relatives.

In the summer P'eng Yüeh, the king of Liang, plotted a revolt. He was removed from his position and exiled to Shu but, when it was found that he was once more scheming to revolt, he was executed with his three sets of relatives. Kao-tsu set up his son Liu Hui as king of Liang and his son Liu Yu as king of Huai-yang.

In autumn, the seventh month, Ch'ing Pu, the king of Huai-nan, revolted, seized the land of Liu Chia, the king of Ching, to the east, and marched north across the Huai River. Liu Chiao, the king of Ch'u, fled to Hsieh. Kao-tsu in person led a force to attack Ch'ing Pu, setting up his son Liu Ch'ang as king of Huai-nan.

In the tenth month of the twelfth year [195 B.C.] Kao-tsu had already attacked Ch'ing Pu's army at Kuei-chui, and Ch'ing Pu was in flight. Kao-tsu dispatched a special general to pursue him, while he himself started back to the capital, passing through his old home of P'ei on his way. Here he stopped and held a feast at the palace of P'ei, summoning all his old friends and the elders and young men to drink to their hearts' content. He gathered together a group of some hundred and twenty children of P'ei and taught them to sing and, when the feast was at its height, Kao-tsu struck the lute and sang a song which he had composed:

A great wind came forth;
The clouds rose on high.
Now that my might rules all within the seas,
I have returned to my old village.
Where shall I find brave men
To guard the four corners of my land?

He made the children join in and repeat the song, while he rose and danced. Deeply moved with grief and nostalgia, and with tears streaming down his face, he said to the elders of P'ei, "The traveler sighs for his old home. Though I have made my capital within the Pass, after I have departed this life my spirit will still think with joy of P'ei. From the time when I was governor of P'ei, I went forth to punish the wicked and violent until at last the whole world is mine. It is my wish that P'ei become my bath-town.[24] I hereby exempt its people from all taxes. For generation after generation, nothing more shall be required of you." Then for over ten days the old men and women and Kao-tsu's former friends of P'ei spent each day drinking and rejoicing, reminiscing and joking about old times.

When Kao-tsu made ready to leave, the men of P'ei all begged him to stay a little longer. Kao-tsu replied, "My retinue is very large and I fear it would be too much for you to supply them with food any longer," and with this he departed. The entire district of P'ei became deserted as everyone flocked to the western edge of the city to present parting gifts. Kao-tsu again halted his progress, set up tents, and drank for three days more. The elders of P'ei all bowed their heads and said, "P'ei has been fortunate enough to have its taxes revoked, but the city of Feng has not been so blessed. We beg that Your Majesty will take pity upon it as well."

"Feng is the place where I was born and grew up," replied Kao-tsu. "It least of all could I ever forget. It is only that I remember how under Yung Ch'ih it turned against me and joined Wei." But the elders of P'ei continued to plead with him until he finally agreed to absolve

[24] A mark of special honor. Such estates were not required to pay taxes to the government, their revenues going instead to provide "bath-water," i.e., private funds for the holder. In later chapters we shall often find "bath-towns" being assigned to princesses.

Feng from its taxes in the same manner as P'ei. He then transferred the marquis of P'ei, Liu P'i, to the position of king of Wu.

The Han generals made separate attacks upon Ch'ing Pu's armies north and south of the T'ao River, defeating them all, and pursued and executed Ch'ing Pu at P'o-yang. Fan K'uai in the meantime led the troops under his command in pacifying the region of Tai and executed Ch'en Hsi at Tang-ch'eng. In the eleventh month Kao-tsu returned from his campaign against Ch'ing Pu to the capital at Ch'ang-an.

In the twelfth month Kao-tsu announced: "The First Emperor of Ch'in, King Yin of Ch'u [Ch'en She], King An-li of Wei, King Min of Ch'i, and King Tao-hsiang of Chao are all without surviving heirs. I hereby establish ten families for each to act as guardians of their graves, except that the First Emperor of Ch'in shall be granted twenty families. In addition the nobleman Wu-chi of Wei shall be granted five families."[25] He also granted pardon to the region of Tai and to all the people and officials who had been robbed and plundered by Ch'en Hsi and Chao Li.

One of Ch'en Hsi's generals who had surrendered reported to Kao-tsu that, at the time when Ch'en Hsi revolted, Lu Wan, the king of Yen, had sent an envoy to Ch'en Hsi to join in plotting with him. The emperor sent Shen I-chi, the marquis of Pi-yang, to fetch Lu Wan, but Lu Wan pleaded illness and declined to go with him. Shen I-chi returned and reported on his mission, declaring that there seemed to be some basis for the report of Lu Wan's disaffection.

In the second month the emperor dispatched Fan K'uai and Chou P'o to lead a force of soldiers and attack Lu Wan. He issued a proclamation freeing all the officials and people of Yen from responsibility for the revolt, and set up his son Liu Chien as the new king of Yen.

When Kao-tsu was fighting against Ch'ing Pu, he was wounded by a stray arrow and on the way back he fell ill. When his illness con-

[25] Since these men had no descendants of their own to look after their graves and perform sacrifices to them, the state undertook to provide families for this purpose, even in the case of the hated First Emperor of Ch'in. For one's grave to go entirely untended was in Chinese eyes the cruelest of fates.

tinued to grow worse, Empress Lü sent for a skilled doctor. The doctor examined Kao-tsu and, in answer to his question, replied, "This illness can be cured." With this, Kao-tsu began to berate and curse him, saying, "I began as a commoner and with my three-foot sword conquered the world. Was this not the will of Heaven? My fate lies with Heaven. Even P'ien Ch'üeh, the most famous doctor of antiquity, could do nothing for me!" In the end he would not let the doctor treat his illness, but gave him fifty catties of gold and sent him away.

When the doctor had gone, Empress Lü asked, "After my lord's allotted years have run out, if Prime Minister Hsiao Ho should die, who could be appointed to fill his place?"

"Ts'ao Ts'an will do," replied the emperor.

"And after him?" the empress asked.

"Wang Ling will do," he replied. "But Wang Ling is rather stupid. He will need Ch'en P'ing to help him. Ch'en P'ing has more than enough brains but he could hardly be entrusted with the position alone. Chou P'o has dignity and generosity, though he lacks learning. Yet it will be Chou P'o who will look out for the welfare of the Liu family. He deserves to be made grand commandant."

"And who after him?" the empress asked again.

"After all these men are gone," he replied, "you will no longer be here to know about it."

Lu Wan, with a force of several thousand cavalry, proceeded to a spot along the border, sending to inquire whether the emperor's condition had improved so that he might be allowed to come to the capital and apologize for his disaffection.

In the fourth month, the day *chia-ch'en* [June 1, 195 B.C.], Kao-tsu passed away in the Palace of Lasting Joy. Four days went by, but no mourning was announced. Empress Lü consulted with Shen I-chi, saying, "The other leaders, like the emperor himself, all made their way up from the ranks of the common people. At present they face north and acknowledge themselves his subjects, but in their hearts they nurse a constant discontent. Now they will be called upon to serve a young master. I fear that, if they and their families are not completely done away with, there will be no peace for the empire!"

Someone overheard these words and reported them to General Li Shang. The general went to visit Shen I-chi and said, "I have heard that the emperor passed away four days ago, but no mourning has yet been announced. I also understand that there are plans for executing all the present leaders. If this is actually carried out, I fear the empire will be in grave peril. Ch'en P'ing and Kuan Ying with a force of a hundred thousand are guarding Jung-yang, while Fan K'uai and Chou P'o with two hundred thousand men are engaged in pacifying Yen and Tai. If they hear that the emperor has passed away and that all the leaders in the capital have been executed, they will surely lead their troops back in this direction and attack the area within the Pass. With the major officials in the capital in revolt and the feudal lords beyond up in arms, we may look for total defeat in a matter of days."

Shen I-chi returned to the palace and reported these words to the empress. Accordingly, on the day *ting-wei* [June 4, 195 B.C.] mourning was proclaimed for the emperor and a general amnesty granted to the empire. When Lu Wan received word of the emperor's passing, he fled from the country and joined the Hsiung-nu.

On the day *ping-yin* [June 23] of the fifth month the emperor was buried at Ch'ang-ling.[26] On the day *chi-ssu* [June 26] the heir apparent was set up. He proceeded to the funerary temple of his grandfather, the Grand Supreme Emperor, where the assembled officials announced: "Kao-tsu rose from the humblest beginnings to correct a discordant age and turn it back to the right. He brought peace and order to the world and became the founder of the Han. His merit was of the most exalted order, and it is therefore appropriate that we should honor him with the title of 'Exalted Supreme Emperor.'" The heir apparent succeeded to the title of Supreme Emperor; he is known posthumously as Emperor Hui the Filial. He gave orders that the feudal lords in each province and kingdom should set up funerary temples to Kao-tsu and perform sacrifices in them at the appropriate seasons of the year. In the fifth year of his reign Emperor Hui, recalling how Kao-tsu had rejoiced and sorrowed on his last visit to P'ei, had the palace of

[26] The end of this sentence has been misplaced and appears in present texts at the very close of the chapter.

P'ei made into a funerary temple for Kao-tsu, ranking second only to the main temple in the capital. The hundred and twenty children whom Kao-tsu had taught to sing he ordered to perform the song to the accompaniment of wind instruments, and when any of the group later dropped out he had them immediately replaced.

Kao-tsu had eight sons. The oldest, a son by a concubine, was Fei, the king of Ch'i, posthumously titled King Tao-hui. The second, a son by Empress Lü, became Emperor Hui. The third, son of Lady Ch'i, was Ju-i, the king of Chao, posthumously titled King Yin. The fourth was Heng, the king of Tai, who later became Emperor Wen the Filial; he was a son of Empress Dowager Po. The fifth was Hui, the king of Liang, who in the reign of Empress Lü was transferred to the position of king of Chao; he was given the posthumous title of King Kung. The sixth was Yu, the king of Huai-yang, whom Empress Lü made the king of Chao; his posthumous title was King Yu. The seventh was Ch'ang, who became King Li of Huai-nan, and the eighth was Chien, the king of Yen.

The Grand Historian remarks: The government of the Hsia dynasty was marked by good faith, which in time deteriorated until mean men had turned it into rusticity. Therefore the men of Shang who succeeded to the Hsia reformed this defect through the virtue of piety. But piety degenerated until mean men had made it a superstitious concern for the spirits. Therefore the men of Chou who followed corrected this fault through refinement and order. But refinement again deteriorated until it became in the hands of the mean a mere hollow show. Therefore what was needed to reform this hollow show was a return to good faith, for the way of the Three Dynasties of old is like a cycle which, when it ends, must begin over again.

It is obvious that in late Chou and Ch'in times the earlier refinement and order had deteriorated. But the government of Ch'in failed to correct this fault, instead adding its own harsh punishments and laws. Was this not a grave error?

Thus when the Han rose to power it took over the faults of its predecessors and worked to change and reform them, causing men to be unflagging in their efforts and following the order properly ordained

by Heaven. It held its court in the tenth month,[27] and its vestments and carriage tops were yellow, with plumes on the left sides of the carriages.

[27] I.e., this was the time each year when the feudal lords were required to attend the court in person and pay their respects for the new year, which in the early Han began in this month.

Shih chi 16 (excerpt): Reflections on the Rise of Emperor Kao-tsu

[This introduction to the "Table by Months of the Times of Ch'in and Ch'u," *Shih chi* 16, is given with a title supplied by the translator.]

Against the tyranny and oppression of the Ch'in the men of Ch'u began their revolt, but Hsiang Yü in turn betrayed his ruler, until the king of Han came to the aid of right and conquered him. Thus in the course of eight years the rulership changed hands three times.[1] Since the period was so crowded with events and the shifts of power were so frequent, I have chosen to outline it in detail in this Table by Months of the Times of Ch'in and Ch'u.

On reading the accounts of the struggle between Ch'in and Ch'u, the Grand Historian remarks: It was Ch'en She who first began the uprising, the Hsiang family who with cruelty and treason destroyed the Ch'in, and the founder of the house of Han who dispersed the rebellion, punished the evildoers, brought peace to all within the seas, and in the end ascended the imperial throne. Within the space of eight years the command of the empire changed hands three times. Since the birth of mankind there have never before been such rapid changes of rulership!

In ancient times, when Shun and Yü became rulers, they had first to accumulate goodness and merit for twenty or thirty years, impress the people with their virtue, prove that they could in practice handle the affairs of government, and meet the approval of Heaven before they were able to ascend the throne. Again, when Kings T'ang and Wu founded the Shang and Chou dynasties, they had behind them over ten generations of ancestors, stretching back to Hsieh and Hou Chi respectively, who had been distinguished for their just and virtuous conduct. Yet, though eight hundred nobles appeared unsummoned to

[1] I.e., from the Ch'in to Hsiang Yü to Han Kao-tsu.

aid King Wu at the Meng Ford, he still did not venture to move; it was only later that he assassinated the tyrant Chou, and only after similar cautious delay that King T'ang banished the tyrant Chieh. Ch'in first rose to prominence under Duke Hsiang and achieved eminence under Dukes Wen and Mu. From the reigns of Dukes Hsieh and Hsiao on, it gradually swallowed up the Six States until, after a hundred years or so, the First Emperor was able to bring all the noblemen under his power. Thus, even with the virtue of Shun, Yü, T'ang, and Wu, or the might of the First Emperor, it is, as one can see, an extremely difficult task to unite the empire in one rule!

After the Ch'in ruler had assumed the title of emperor, he was fearful lest warfare should continue because of the presence of feudal lords. Therefore he refused to grant so much as a foot of land in fief, but instead destroyed the fortifications of the principal cities, melted down the lance and arrow points, and ruthlessly wiped out the brave men of the world, hoping thus to ensure the safety of his dynasty for countless generations to come. Yet from the lanes of the common people there arose a man with the deeds of a king whose alliances and campaigns of attack surpassed those of the three dynasties of Hsia, Shang, and Chou. Ch'in's earlier prohibitions against feudalism and the possession of arms, as it turned out, served only to aid worthy men and remove from their path obstacles they would otherwise have encountered. Therefore Kao-tsu had but to roar forth his indignation to become a leader of the world. Why should people say that one cannot become a king unless he possesses land? Was this man not what the old books term a "great sage"? Surely this was the work of Heaven! Who but a great sage would be worthy to receive the mandate of Heaven and become emperor?

Part IV

THE GREAT MINISTERS

Shih chi 53: The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Hsiao

When the armies of Ch'u surrounded us at Jung-yang and we were locked in stalemate for three years, Hsiao Ho governed the land west of the mountains, plotting our welfare, sending a constant stream of reinforcements, and supplying rations and provisions without end. He caused the people to rejoice in Han and hate the alliance of Ch'u. Thus I made The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Hsiao.

Prime Minister Hsiao Ho was a native of Feng in the district of P'ei. Because of his thorough understanding of law and letters he was made a director of officials in P'ei. While Kao-tsu was still a commoner, Hsiao Ho on numerous occasions took advantage of his official capacity to help Kao-tsu out. After Kao-tsu became a village head he in turn did all he could to assist Hsiao Ho. When Kao-tsu was sent with a band of *corvée* laborers to Hsien-yang, each of the other officials presented him with three hundred cash as a parting gift, but Hsiao Ho alone gave five hundred.

As an official of P'ei, Hsiao Ho worked with the secretary of Ch'in who was in charge of overseeing the province. Because he conducted his affairs with consistent discretion and understanding, he was given the position of a provincial secretary of Ssu River, where his record was also of the highest order. The secretary of Ch'in planned on his return to the capital to make a report of Hsiao Ho's good record and have him appointed to a position in the central government, but Hsiao Ho begged not to be transferred.

When Kao-tsu rose to the position of governor of P'ei, Hsiao Ho always served as his aide and looked after official business for him. At the time when Kao-tsu marched into the capital of Hsien-yang, all the generals rushed to the storehouses and fought with each other over Ch'in's goods and treasures. But Hsiao Ho entered ahead of them

and gathered up all the maps and official records that had belonged to Ch'in's ministers and secretaries and stored them away. When Kao-tsu became king of Han, Hsiao Ho served as his prime minister. Hsiang Yü arrived later with the other nobles, massacred the inhabitants of Hsien-yang, burned the city, and then marched away. But because of the maps and registries of Ch'in which Hsiao Ho had in his possession, the king of Han was able to inform himself of all the strategic defense points of the empire, the population and relative strength of the various districts, and the ills and grievances of the people.

On the recommendation of Hsiao Ho, the king of Han took Han Hsin into his service and made him a major general. (A discussion of this will be found in the chapter on Han Hsin, the marquis of Huai-yin.)

When the king of Han led his forces east again to conquer the three kingdoms of Ch'in, he left Hsiao Ho behind as his prime minister to govern Pa and Shu, with instructions to ensure their well-being and loyalty, propagandize for his cause, and see that provisions were sent to feed his army.

In the second year of Han [205 B.C.], while the king of Han and the other feudal leaders were attacking Ch'u, Hsiao Ho remained behind to guard the area within the Pass and look after the heir apparent. Establishing the seat of government in Yüeh-yang, he worked to simplify the laws and statutes and set up dynastic temples and altars, palaces and district offices. All affairs he reported immediately to the king of Han, and acted only upon his permission and approval. If it was impossible to report to the king at the time, he disposed of the matter as he thought best and asked the king's opinion on his return. He had charge of all affairs within the Pass, drawing up registers of the population and sending supplies by land and water to provision the army. The king of Han several times lost large parts of his army and was forced to retreat in flight, but each time Hsiao Ho raised more troops from the area within the Pass and immediately brought the army back up to strength. For this reason the king entrusted sole charge of the land within the Pass to him.

In the third year of Han [204 B.C.], the king of Han and Hsiang Yü

were locked in stalemate in the area So in Ching. The king several times sent envoys to reward and encourage Hsiao Ho for his labors. Master Po spoke to Hsiao Ho, saying, "While His Majesty is forced to camp in the fields and suffer the hardships of exposure, he sends envoys to reward and encourage you. It must be that he doubts your loyalty. I think it would be best for you to summon all your sons and brothers who are fit to take up arms and send them to join the army. Then the king will surely have greater confidence in you." Hsiao Ho followed his suggestion and the king was greatly pleased.

In the fifth year of Han [202 B.C.], after Hsiang Yü had been killed and the empire brought to peace, discussions were begun as to who had won merit and who should be enfeoffed but, because there was a great deal of contention among the officials over their respective achievements, the year passed before the matter could be settled.

The king of Han, now emperor, considered that Hsiao Ho had achieved the highest merit, and hence enfeoffed him as marquis of Tsuan with the revenue from a large number of towns. But the other distinguished officials objected, saying, "We have all buckled on armor and taken up our weapons, some of us fighting as many as a hundred or more engagements, the least of us fighting twenty or thirty. Each, to a greater or lesser degree, has engaged in attacks upon cities or seizures of territory. And yet Hsiao Ho, who has never campaigned on the sweaty steeds of battle, but only sat here with brush and ink deliberating on questions of state instead of fighting, is awarded a position above us. How can this be?"

"Gentlemen," the emperor asked, "do you know anything about hunting?"

"We do," they replied.

"And do you know anything about hunting dogs?"

"We do."

"Now in a hunt," the emperor said, "it is the dog who is sent to pursue and kill the beast. But the one who unleashes the dog and points out the place where the beast is hiding is the huntsman. You, gentlemen, have only succeeded in capturing the beast, and so your achievement is that of hunting dogs. But it is Hsiao Ho who unleashed you and pointed out the place, and his achievement is that of the

huntsman. Also in your case only you yourselves, or at most two or three of your family, joined in following me. But Hsiao Ho dispatched his whole family numbering twenty or thirty members to accompany me. This is a service I can hardly forget."

None of the officials dared say anything further. The various marquises having been granted their fiefs, the question of what order of precedence they should take was brought before the emperor. "Ts'ao Ts'an, the marquis of P'ing-yang," the officials stated, "bears on his body the scars of seventy wounds. In attacking cities and seizing territory he has achieved the greatest merit. It is proper that he should be given first place."

The emperor had already contravened the will of his ministers by granting Hsiao Ho such a generous fief, and when it came to the question of precedence he did not feel that he could dispute their judgment a second time, though personally he wanted Hsiao Ho to be given first place. At this point Lord E, a marquis of the area within the Pass, came forward. "The opinion of the other ministers," he said, "is in my estimation a mistake. Although Ts'ao Ts'an has won merit by fighting in the field and seizing territory, this was an accomplishment of the moment. While the emperor was locked in battle with Hsiang Yü for five years, he several times lost the major part of his army, and was on occasion forced to flee for his life in retreat. But each time Hsiao Ho sent reinforcements from the area within the Pass to bring the army back to strength. The emperor sent no orders for men and yet, just when his forces were weakest and most in danger of annihilation, a new contingent of some ten thousand recruits would arrive. Again, when Han and Ch'u were stalemated for several years at Jung-yang, our army ran completely out of provisions, but Hsiao Ho sent supplies by land and water from the area within the Pass and saved our men from starvation. Though His Majesty several times lost control of the land east of the mountains, Hsiao Ho kept firm hold on the area within the Pass and awaited His Majesty's final return. His achievements were not a matter of a moment, but deserve everlasting honor. Han could have done without a hundred men like Ts'ao Ts'an and never felt the loss, nor would their presence have assured inevitable victory by any means. How then can one suggest

that the achievements of a moment take precedence over those of all time? Hsiao Ho should clearly be granted first place, and Ts'ao Ts'an ranked second."

The emperor approved this suggestion; in addition he granted Hsiao Ho the privilege of wearing his sword and shoes when he ascended to the audience chamber, and absolved him from the duty of hurrying when he entered court.[1]

The emperor announced, "I have heard that he who works for the advancement of worthy men deserves the highest reward. Although Hsiao Ho achieved the most outstanding merit, it was Lord E who made this fact clear." With this he granted Lord E the title of marquis of P'ing-an, awarding him the cities from which he already received the revenue as a marquis within the Pass.[2] On the same day he enfeoffed all of Hsiao Ho's male relatives, some ten or more, with the revenue of various towns, and increased Hsiao Ho's original fief by two thousand households. This last, according to the emperor, was done because when he had once been sent on labor service to Hsien-yang Hsiao Ho had presented him with two hundred cash more than any of the other officials as a parting gift.

In the eleventh year of Han [196 B.C.] Ch'en Hsi revolted. Kao-tsu marched to Han-tan to attack him, but before the campaign was completed Han Hsin, the marquis of Huai-yin, began to plot a rebellion in the area within the Pass. Empress Lü followed Hsiao Ho's advice and executed Han Hsin. (A discussion will be found in the chapter on Han Hsin.) When the emperor received word of Han Hsin's execution, he sent a messenger to honor Hsiao Ho with the position of prime minister and increase his fief by five thousand households, granting him at the same time a private retinue of five hundred soldiers headed by a colonel to act as his bodyguard.

All the other ministers went to congratulate Hsiao Ho on his good fortune, but Shao P'ing alone presented condolences as though upon

[1] Chinese etiquette forbade ministers to wear their swords or shoes when they entered the emperor's presence. In addition they were required to scurry into court instead of walking at a normal pace. By excepting him from these requirements the emperor was conferring upon Hsiao Ho the marks of extreme honor.

[2] The "marquises within the Pass" ordinarily did not hold possession of any lands, but only received the revenues from the cities in their fiefs.

a death. (Shao P'ing had been the marquis of Tung-ling under Ch'in, but when Ch'in was defeated he was made a commoner. Being very poor, he used to raise melons east of the city of Ch'ang-an. His melons were known for their excellent flavor and everyone called them "Tung-ling melons" after the title that Shao P'ing had once held.) Shao P'ing said to him, "Some misfortune will come from this. The emperor is away in battle and has left you to guard the capital area, and yet, though you suffer none of the perils of war, he suddenly increases your fief and grants you a bodyguard. It must be that, because of the recent revolt of Han Hsin in the capital area, he doubts your loyalty. He has granted you a bodyguard not for your own protection but because he does not trust you. I beg you to decline the new enfeoffment and not accept it, but instead to make a contribution to the expenses of the campaign from your own private wealth. Then the emperor's mind will be set at ease." Hsiao Ho followed his advice, to the great pleasure of the emperor.

In the autumn of the twelfth year of Han [195 B.C.] Ch'ing Pu revolted. The emperor in person led a force to attack him, from time to time sending envoys back to the capital to ask what Hsiao Ho was doing. While the emperor was away in battle Hsiao Ho continued to look after the wants of the people and encourage them in their labors, sending all the assistance he could to the army as he had done at the time of Ch'en Hsi's revolt. But one of his retainers advised him, saying, "It will not be long before your family is wiped out. You have been made prime minister and given the highest rank in the empire. There is no further honor that can be added to this. Now it has been over ten years since you first entered the Pass and won the hearts of the people. They are all unswervingly loyal to you, for you have ceaselessly and with the greatest diligence worked for their peace and well-being. The reason the emperor keeps sending to ask what you are doing is that he is afraid you will betray him and start an uprising within the Pass. Why don't you buy up a lot of farm land on credit and start speculating in goods at a cheap price so that you will create a reputation for being corrupt? Then the emperor's mind will be set somewhat at ease." [3]

[3] This would seem an odd way to set the emperor's mind at ease, but all the suggestion means is that Hsiao Ho should do something to decrease his popularity, which had reached dangerous proportions.

Hsiao Ho followed this suggestion and the emperor was very pleased. When his campaign against Ch'ing Pu was completed and he led his army back to the capital, the people crowded along the roadside presenting petitions to the emperor accusing the prime minister of forcing them to sell their land and houses at an unfair price and accumulating a fortune of twenty or thirty million cash. After the emperor reached the capital, Hsiao Ho appeared before him. "I see that you have been making a profit from the people," said the emperor laughing. He then handed over to Hsiao Ho the petitions that had been presented, adding, "You must do something to make amends to them!"

Hsiao Ho accordingly made this request on behalf of the people: "The region of Ch'ang-an is very narrow and constricted, and yet there is a great deal of idle land going to waste in the Shang-ling Park.[4] I beg that the people be allowed to use the park for farm land, leaving the straw and other remains of their crops as fodder for beasts."

The emperor flew into a rage. "You have succeeded in getting a lot of money and bribes from the merchants and now for their sake you want to take my park away from me!" He turned Hsiao Ho over to the law officials to be put into chains.

A few days later one of the palace guards named Wang who was in attendance advanced and inquired, "What terrible crime has the prime minister committed that Your Majesty has so suddenly thrown him into prison?"

"I have heard," replied the emperor, "that when Li Ssu was prime minister to the emperor of Ch'in if anything good came about he attributed it to his sovereign, but for anything bad he accepted responsibility himself. But now my prime minister has been accepting money from a lot of dirty merchants and in return asks for my park so that he can ingratiate himself with the people. Therefore I have had him put in chains and punished."

"But if in the course of his duties the prime minister becomes aware of something that will benefit the people," objected Wang, "it is his

[4] The emperor's private hunting park.

duty to request it. Why should Your Majesty suppose that he has been accepting money from the merchants? During the years when Your Majesty was battling Ch'u, and later, when Ch'en Hsi and Ch'ing Pu revolted, Your Majesty was away leading the armies, while the prime minister the whole time guarded the area within the Pass. At that time he had no more than to nod his head and Your Majesty would have lost possession of the whole area west of the Pass. But since he did not take that opportunity to scheme for his own profit, why should he now try to profit from the money of the merchants? As for the ruler of Ch'in, the reason he did not become aware of his own faults and eventually lost the empire was that Li Ssu kept accepting the blame for things himself. Ch'in can therefore hardly be taken as a model. Is it not very shortsighted of Your Majesty to suspect the prime minister in this fashion?"

The emperor was deeply perplexed, but before the day was over he dispatched a messenger bearing the imperial seals with orders to pardon Hsiao Ho and release him. Hsiao Ho was by this time well on in years and, being by nature extremely respectful and circumspect in his manner, came before the emperor barefooted and begged for forgiveness. "You may go!" said the emperor. "You asked for the park for the sake of the people. In denying your request I have acted no better than the tyrants Chieh and Chou of old, while you have shown yourself a worthy minister. The reason I had you bound was so that the people might all hear of my fault."

Hsiao Ho had never been on good terms with Ts'ao Ts'an. When Hsiao Ho fell ill Emperor Hui, who had succeeded his father, Kao-tsu, on the throne, came in person to inquire about his illness. "When your hundred years are ended," the emperor asked, "who can fill your place?"

"No one knows his ministers better than their lord," Hsiao Ho replied.

"What about Ts'ao Ts'an?"

Hsiao Ho bowed his head and answered, "As long as my lord has him, I may die without regret."

In selecting his lands and residence, Hsiao Ho always chose to live in an out-of-the-way place with no elaborate walls or roofs to his house.

"This way, if my descendants are worthy men," he used to say, "they will follow my example of frugal living. And if they turn out to be unworthy, they will at least have nothing that the more powerful families can take away from them."

In the second year of Emperor Hui [193 B.C.] Prime Minister Hsiao Ho died. He was granted the posthumous title of Wen-chung or "Civil Fulfillment Marquis." In the fourth generation his heirs, because of some offense, were deprived of the marquisate, but shortly afterwards the emperor sought out Hsiao Ho's descendant and enfeoffed him as marquis of Tsuan to carry on the line. None of the other distinguished ministers received such honor.

The Grand Historian remarks: Prime Minister Hsiao Ho in the time of Ch'in was a petty official, wielding his brush and scraper [5] and going about his business without distinction or honor. But when the Han, like a great sun or moon, rose in the sky, he caught a little of its brilliance. With the gravest care he guarded what was charged to him as though under lock and key and, because the people groaned under the laws of Ch'in, he gratified their wishes by making a new beginning for the empire. When Han Hsin, Ch'ing Pu, and the others had all been wiped out, his glory alone grew ever brighter. First among the ranks of officials, renowned in later ages, his fame rivals that of the ancient ministers Hung Yao and San I!

[5] Writing at this time was done on strips of wood. When the clerk made a mistake, he would scrape the surface of the wood clean and write on it again.

Shih chi 55: The Hereditary House of the Marquis of Liu (Chang Liang)

Plotted within the tents of command, shaping victory out of chaos, these were the schemes and strategies of Chang Liang. Though he lacked fame or the renown of valor, he foresaw the difficult while it was still easy and brought forth great things from small. Thus I made The Hereditary House of the Marquis of Liu.

The ancestors of Chang Liang,[1] the marquis of Liu, were men of the state of Hann. His grandfather Chang K'ai-ti served as prime minister to Marquis Chao and Kings Hsüan-hui and Hsiang-ai of Hann. His father, Chang P'ing, was prime minister to Kings Li and Tao-hui and died in the twenty-third year of King Tao-hui's reign. Twenty years after Chang P'ing's death Ch'in destroyed the state of Hann. Because of his youth, Chang Liang never had an opportunity to serve as a minister of Hann. When the state was destroyed, Chang Liang was left with a retinue of three hundred male servants. On his younger brother's death, he conducted no elaborate funeral but instead used all his family's wealth to search for someone who would undertake to assassinate the king of Ch'in for him, hoping thus to avenge the rulers of Hann, five generations of whom his father and grandfather had served.

Chang Liang once journeyed to Huai-yang to study ritual and there met the lord of Ts'ang-hai. Through him he obtained the services of a man renowned for his great strength. Chang Liang had an iron bludgeon made which weighed a hundred and twenty catties and, when the Ch'in emperor came east on a tour, he and the assassin lay in wait for him. When the emperor reached the area of Po-lang-sha they made their attack, but mistakenly struck the carriage of his attendants. The emperor was enraged and ordered an immediate search throughout the

[1] His polite name was Tzu-fang.

empire for the rebels, hoping to seize Chang Liang. Chang Liang assumed a false name and fled into hiding in Hsia-p'ei.

Chang Liang was once strolling idly along an embankment in Hsia-p'ei when an old man wearing a coarse gown appeared. Reaching the place where Chang Liang was, he deliberately dropped his shoe down the embankment and, turning to Chang Liang, said, "Fetch me my shoe, young man!"

Chang Liang, completely taken aback, was about to hit him, but because the man was old he swallowed his resentment and climbed down and got the shoe. "Put it on for me!" ordered the old man, and Chang Liang, since he had already gone to the trouble of fetching it, knelt respectfully and prepared to put on the shoe. The old man held out his foot and, when the shoe was on, laughed and went on his way. Chang Liang, more startled than ever, stood looking after him. When the old man had gone some distance, he turned and came back. "You could be taught, young man," he said. "Meet me here at dawn five days from now!" Chang Liang, thinking this all very strange, knelt and replied, "I will do as you say."

At dawn five days later he went to the place, but found the man already there. "When you have an appointment with an old man, how is it that you come late?" he asked angrily. "Go away, and meet me at dawn five days from now, only come earlier!"

Five days later Chang Liang got up at the crow of the cock and went to the place, but once more the old man had gotten there before him. "Why are you late again?" the old man asked in anger. "Go away, and five days from now come earlier!"

Five days later Chang Liang went to the place before half the night was through. After a while the old man came along. "This is the way it should be!" he said. Then, producing a book, he said, "If you read this you may become the teacher of kings. Ten years from now your fortune will rise. Thirteen years from now you will see me again. A yellow stone at the foot of Mount Ku-ch'eng in northern Ch'i—that will be I." Without another word he left and Chang Liang never saw him again.

When dawn came Chang Liang examined the book which the old man had given him and found it to be *The Grand Duke's Art of*

War. He set great store by it and was to be found constantly poring over it.

Chang Liang lived the life of a wandering knight in Hsia-p'ei, where he was joined in hiding by Hsiang Po, who had killed a man. Ten years later Ch'en She and his men started their uprising. Chang Liang also gathered a band of some hundred young men and, when Ching Chü set himself up as acting king of Ch'u in Liu, started out to join him there. Along the way, however, he met the governor of P'ei, who was leading a force of a thousand soldiers and attempting to seize control of the region from Hsia-p'ei west. Chang Liang joined the governor of P'ei, who honored him with the position of cavalry general. From time to time Chang Liang expounded *The Grand Duke's Art of War* to the governor of P'ei. The latter greatly admired it and always followed the strategies which it outlined, but when Chang Liang discussed the book with other men they refused to pay him any heed. "The governor of P'ei will soon be chosen by Heaven," he said, and for this reason he followed him and did not go to join Ching Chü.

The governor of P'ei went to Hsieh to meet Hsiang Liang, who at this time set up King Huai of Ch'u. Chang Liang took this opportunity to speak to Hsiang Liang. "You have already set up the descendants of Ch'u," he said, "but Ch'eng, the lord of Heng-yang, who is a descendant of the royal house of Hann, is also a worthy man. If you were to set him up as a king you would greatly increase the strength of your party."

Hsiang Liang accordingly sent Chang Liang to seek out Hann Ch'eng and make him king of Hann, with Chang Liang as his minister of instruction. Chang Liang joined the king in leading a band of a thousand men west to seize the region of Hann but, though they captured several cities, the Ch'in forces immediately retook them. Chang Liang then roamed with his troops back and forth in the region of Ying-ch'uan.

When the governor of P'ei marched south from Lo-yang to Huan-yüan, Chang Liang led his men to join him; together they captured more than ten cities of Hann and defeated the Ch'in general, Yang Hsiung. The governor of P'ei ordered Ch'eng, the king of Hann, to stay behind and guard the city of Yang-ti while he and Chang Liang

marched south, attacking and capturing Yüan. From there they marched west and entered the Wu Pass. The governor of P'ei wanted to take a force of twenty thousand men and attack the Ch'in army encamped at the foot of Mount Yao, but Chang Liang advised against this. "Ch'in's forces are still strong and cannot be lightly dismissed. I have heard that their general is the son of a butcher. Such paltry tradespeople are easily moved by the prospect of gain. I would advise you to remain here and build defense walls, sending someone ahead with a force of fifty thousand men and the necessary provisions, and set up pennants and flags on the surrounding hills so that they will think we have more soldiers than we do. Then you may dispatch Li I-chi with rich presents to tempt the Ch'in general."

As they had hoped, the Ch'in general succumbed to the temptation and turned traitor, asking to join the governor of P'ei in marching west to attack Hsien-yang. The governor of P'ei was about to grant his request, but Chang Liang once more intervened. "It is only the general who has expressed his willingness to revolt. I fear that his soldiers will not follow him. If his men do not follow his example, it will be most dangerous for us. It would be better to take advantage of their present laxity and attack."

The governor of P'ei accordingly led his troops in an attack on the Ch'in army, inflicting a great defeat. Pursuing them northward, he once more engaged them in battle at Lan-t'ien until the Ch'in army agreed to a final surrender. The governor of P'ei then marched to Hsien-yang where Tzu-ying, the king of Ch'in, surrendered to him.

When the governor of P'ei entered the palace of Ch'in, he found halls and pavilions, dogs, horses, treasures, and waiting women by the thousand. He wanted to remain in the palace, but Fan K'uai advised him to leave the capital and camp in the field. When the governor refused to listen, Chang Liang spoke up. "It is because of Ch'in's violent and unprincipled ways that you have come this far. Now that you have freed the world of these tyrannical bandits it is proper that you should don the plain white garments of mourning as a pledge of your sympathy for the sufferings of the people. Having just entered the capital of Ch'in, if you were now to indulge yourself in its pleasures, this would be 'helping the tyrant Chieh to work his vio-

lence.' Good advice is hard on the ears, but it profits the conduct just as good medicine, though bitter in the mouth, cures the sickness. I beg you to listen to Fan K'uai's counsel!"

The governor of P'ei accordingly returned and camped at Pa-shang. When Hsiang Yü reached Hung-men, he made preparations to attack the governor. Hsiang Po hastened in the night to the governor's camp and visited Chang Liang in secret, urging him to run away with him, but Chang Liang replied, "I have been sent by the king of Hann to follow the governor of P'ei. Now when he is in grave difficulty it would not be right for me to run away."

Chang Liang then went and reported to the governor all that Hsiang Po had told him. "What shall we do?" asked the governor in great astonishment.

"Do you really intend to defy Hsiang Yü?" Chang Liang asked in reply.

"Some fool advised me that if I blocked the Pass and did not allow the other leaders to enter, I could become king of the whole region of Ch'in," said the governor. "Therefore I followed his suggestion."

"And do you yourself actually believe that you can defeat Hsiang Yü?"

The governor of P'ei was silent for a long time and then said, "No, of course not. But what should we do now?"

Chang Liang went outside and urged Hsiang Po to come in and join them. When Hsiang Po had entered, the governor drank a toast with him and they swore to be friends. The governor requested Hsiang Po to explain to Hsiang Yü that he had no intention of betraying him, but had closed the Pass only to prevent bandits from getting in. On his return, Hsiang Po went to see Hsiang Yü and explained the situation so that the governor was cleared of suspicion. (A full account will be found in the chapter on Hsiang Yü.)

In the first month of the first year of Han [206 B.C.] the governor of P'ei became king of Han ruling the area of Pa and Shu. He presented Chang Liang with a gift of a hundred weights of gold and two pecks of pearls, which Chang Liang in turn presented to Hsiang Po. The king of Han also instructed Chang Liang to give Hsiang Po a generous farewell and request him on behalf of the king of Han to ask

Hsiang Yü for the territory of Han. Hsiang Yü granted the request, and as a result the region of Han was added to the territories of Pa and Shu as part of the king of Han's fief.

When the king of Han proceeded to his territory, Chang Liang accompanied him as far as Hsiu. The king then ordered Chang Liang to return to his own land of Hann. "Would it not be well," Chang Liang advised, "to burn and destroy the wooden roadway which you have passed over? This would prove to the world that you have no intention of marching east again and thus set Hsiang Yü's mind at ease." The king ordered Chang Liang to destroy the roadway on his way back.

When Chang Liang reached Hann, he discovered that Hsiang Yü had not allowed Ch'eng, the king of Hann, to proceed to his own territory, but instead had taken Ch'eng with him in his march to the east. This he had done because Ch'eng had sent Chang Liang to serve the governor of P'ei. Chang Liang reported to Hsiang Yü that the king of Han had destroyed the wooden roadway and had no intention of returning east; he also revealed to him that T'ien Jung, the king of Ch'i, was planning a revolt. Because of this Hsiang Yü considered that he had nothing to worry about from Han in the west and instead sent his troops north to attack Ch'i. But he would never allow the king of Hann to proceed to his kingdom; instead he changed his title to that of marquis and later murdered him at P'eng-ch'eng.

Chang Liang fled and secretly made his way to join the king of Han, who in the meantime had already marched back from his territory and conquered the three kingdoms of Ch'in. Chang Liang was made marquis of Ch'eng-hsin, and accompanied the king of Han east to attack Hsiang Yü at P'eng-ch'eng, but they were defeated and forced to retreat to Hsia-i. The king of Han dismounted, threw his saddle on the ground and, squatting on it, said, "I wish to give away the lands east of the Pass![2] But if I am in any case to abandon them, it would be best to assign them to someone who is likely to be of service to me. Who would be suitable?"

[2] The king's wish was rather premature, since he by no means possessed control of the area east of the Pass at this time. What he means is that he is willing to abandon any direct claim to the lands in an effort to win allies to his side.

Chang Liang came forward and said, "Ch'ing Pu, the king of Chiu-chiang, has fought courageously as a general for Ch'u but is now at odds with Hsiang Yü, while P'eng Yüeh has joined with T'ien Jung, the king of Ch'i, in raising a revolt in the region of Liang. It would be well to dispatch envoys to consult with these two men as soon as possible. Among your own generals Han Hsin alone could be entrusted with a fourth of our great undertaking. If you wish to give away your lands, you had best give them to these three. Then Hsiang Yü can surely be defeated."

The king of Han accordingly dispatched Sui Ho to bargain with Ch'ing Pu, and another envoy to conclude an agreement with P'eng Yüeh. When Pao, the king of Wei, revolted, he sent Han Hsin with a force to attack him. Thus he was able to win the lands of Yen, Tai, Ch'i, and Chao over to his side. It was due to the efforts of these three men—Ch'ing Pu, P'eng Yüeh, and Han Hsin—that he eventually destroyed Hsiang Yü. Chang Liang himself suffered from frequent illness and could not take part in any expeditions. Instead he plotted the course of the various campaigns for the king of Han and accompanied him from time to time.

In the third year of Han [204 B.C.] Hsiang Yü suddenly surrounded the king of Han at Jung-yang. Alarmed at the situation, the king consulted with Li I-chi to see if there were not some way to weaken Hsiang Yü's grip on the empire. "In ancient times," Li I-chi replied, "when T'ang overthrew Chieh, he enfeoffed Chieh's descendants in Chi, and later when King Wu attacked Chou, he enfeoffed Chou's heirs in Sung. Now Ch'in, abandoning virtue and disregarding righteousness, has overthrown the sacred altars of the feudal lords and wiped out the descendants of the Six States, leaving them not enough territory to stick the point of an awl into. If you could only reestablish the descendants of the former kingdoms and present them with the seals of enfeoffment, then they, their ministers, and their people, being every one indebted to your virtue, would one and all turn in longing toward your righteousness and beg to become your subjects. With virtue and righteousness made manifest, you might face south and name yourself a dictator, and Hsiang Yü, gathering his sleeves together in respectful salute, would most certainly come to pay you homage."[3]

"Excellent!" exclaimed the king. "I shall have the seals of enfeoffment carved at once and you, sir, shall bear them to the lords for me."

Li I-chi had not yet departed on his mission when Chang Liang entered the presence of the king, who was at his meal. "Come in," said the king. "One of my followers has just been explaining to me how I can break the power of Ch'u," and he repeated all that Li I-chi had said. "What do you think?" he asked.

"Who has thought up this plan for you?" said Chang Liang. "It will destroy you!"

"How so?" asked the king.

"Let me borrow this pair of chopsticks and I will explain my ideas to you," he said.[4] "Now in ancient times when T'ang attacked Chieh and enfeoffed his descendants in Chi he did so only because he knew that he had the power to put Chieh to death. But do you have the power to inflict death on Hsiang Yü?"

"No, not yet," said the king.

"That is the first reason this plan will not succeed. Again, when King Wu attacked Emperor Chou and enfeoffed his descendant in Sung, he knew that he could have Chou's head whenever he wanted it. But could you have Hsiang Yü's head?"

"Not yet."

"This is the second reason. When King Wu entered the capital of the Shang dynasty, he honored the village where Shang Yung lived, freed Chi Tzu from prison, and enlarged the grave of Pi Kan. Are you in a position to enlarge the graves of the sages, honor the villages of the virtuous, and bow before the gates of the wise?"

"No."

[3] The typical idealistic Confucian argument that virtue alone will conquer all obstacles.

[4] In the following discourse we must imagine Chang Liang marking off the points of his argument in some way with the chopsticks. He deliberately uses the same historical precedents which Li I-chi has used, but shows that they are not relevant to the present case.

"This is the third reason. In addition King Wu distributed grain from the Chü-ch'iao granary, and scattered among the poor and starving the riches of the Deer Terrace. Can you too open the storehouses and granaries to relieve the needy?"

"No," replied the king.

"The fourth reason," said Chang Liang. "When King Wu had completed the conquest of Shang, he converted his war chariots into carriages, cast aside his shields and spears, and covered them with tiger skins to show the world that he did not intend again to take up arms. But can you put away your weapons and apply yourself to the arts of peace, never again taking up arms?"

"No," replied the king.

"The fifth reason," said Chang Liang. "He loosed his war horses on the sunny side of Mount Hua to show he had no further use for them. Can you?"

"No."

"The sixth reason. He turned his oxen to pasture in the shade of the T'ao forest to show he would transport no more supplies. Can you do without oxen to haul supplies?"

Once more, "No."

"The seventh reason. At present all the brave men throughout the empire have taken leave of their families, left the graves of their ancestors, and flocked from their old homes to join in following you, only because day and night they dream of winning a bit of land for themselves. Now if you restore the Six States and set up the descendants of Hann, Wei, Yen, Chao, Ch'i and Ch'u, these followers of yours will go back to serve their own lords, return to their old homes and the graves of their ancestors, and look after their own families. And who will be left to fight with you? This is the eighth reason! As long as Hsiang Yü is as strong as he is, the descendants of the Six States will simply bow to his power and follow him. How could you possibly make him submit to you? Therefore I say that if you follow this plan, it will destroy you!"

The king of Han stopped eating, spat out a mouthful of food, and began to curse. "That idiot Confucianist came near to spoiling the whole business for his father!" [5] he cried, and sent orders at once to have the seals destroyed.

In the fourth year of Han [203 B.C.] Han Hsin conquered Ch'i and announced that he wished to set himself up as king of Ch'i. The king of Han was angry but, on the advice of Chang Liang, sent Chang to present Han Hsin with the seals making him king of Ch'i. (A full account will be found in the chapter on Han Hsin.)

In the autumn the king of Han pursued Hsiang Yü as far as the south of Yang-hsia but, failing to win a victory, fortified his position at Ku-ling. The other leaders did not appear for the meeting which had been arranged but Chang Liang suggested a plan for the king whereby they were induced to come. (Full account in the chapter on Hsiang Yü.)

In the first month of the sixth year [201 B.C.] the king of Han, now emperor, enfeoffed his followers who had won distinction. Though Chang Liang had achieved no glory on the field of battle, the emperor said to him, "Your merit was won by sitting within the tents of command and plotting strategies that assured us victories a thousand miles away. You must select for yourself thirty thousand households of Ch'i."

"When I first began an uprising at Hsia-p'ei," Chang Liang replied, "I met Your Majesty at Liu. It was as though Heaven had sent me to serve you. You listened to my suggestions, and fortunately they turned out to be apt for the times. I shall be content if I may be enfeoffed with Liu alone. I dare not accept thirty thousand households." The emperor made him marquis of Liu and enfeoffed him at the same time as Hsiao Ho and the others.

The sixth year: The emperor had already enfeoffed over twenty of his ministers who had achieved signal distinction, but the rest of his followers argued day and night over who had won greater merit so that no further enfeoffments could be carried out. When the emperor was residing at the Southern Palace in Lo-yang, he looked down one

[5] The use of the phrase "his father" or "your father" to denote one's self is highly insulting, implying as it does that one has made free with the mother of the person referred to or addressed.

day from a covered walk [6] and saw his followers walking restlessly about the courtyard and sitting on the ground talking together. "What are they talking about?" he asked Chang Liang.

"Your Majesty does not know?" said Chang Liang. "They are plotting a revolt."

"But peace and order have only just been restored to the empire. Why should they be planning a revolt?"

"When Your Majesty rose from among the common people, it was through these men that you seized control of the empire. You have become the Son of Heaven, but those whom you have enfeoffed have all been close friends from old days, such as Hsiao Ho and Ts'ao Ts'an, while all your enemies of former times you have had executed. Now these, the officers of your army, reckoning up the merits they have won, believe that there is not sufficient land in the whole empire to enfeoff them all. So some of them fear they will not receive a just allotment, while others tremble lest, falling under suspicion for some error of their past, they be condemned to execution. Therefore they gather together in this way and plot rebellion."

"What should I do?" asked the emperor in consternation.

"Among the men you dislike, and all your followers know you dislike, whom do you hate the most?"

"Yung Ch'ih and I are ancient enemies," replied the emperor. "Many times in the past he has brought me trouble and shame. I would like to have killed him, but because his merit is great I have not had the heart."

"You must hurry and enfeoff Yung Ch'ih before anyone else, and make known what you have done to your other followers. When they see that Yung Ch'ih has been enfeoffed, they will all feel assured of their own rewards," said Chang Liang.

The emperor thereupon held a feast and enfeoffed Yung Ch'ih as marquis of Shih-fang, ordering the prime minister and imperial secretary to settle the question of rewards and carry out the remainder of the enfeoffments with all dispatch. When the other ministers left

[6] These elevated walks were built to connect various buildings in the palace grounds and allowed the emperor to pass over the upper level undisturbed while lesser officials and lackeys went about their business in the courtyard below, thus saving time and bother for all concerned.

the banquet, they said to each other happily, "If even Yung Ch'ih can become a marquis, the rest of us have nothing to worry about!"

Liu Ching had advised the emperor to make his capital in the area within the Pass, but the emperor still hesitated. Since most of his followers came from east of the mountains, they urged him to establish the capital at Lo-yang, pointing out that it was protected by Ch'eng-kao on the east and Mount Yao and the Min Lake on the west, with its back to the Yellow River and the I and Lo rivers flowing before it, and could therefore be easily fortified and held. But Chang Liang objected, saying, "Although Lo-yang has these natural defenses, the area within is so small it does not exceed a few hundred *li*. The land is poor and open to attack from four sides, so that from a military point of view it is quite unsuitable. The area within the Pass, on the other hand, is protected by Mount Yao and the Han-ku Pass on the left and by Lung and Shu to the right,[7] comprising some thousand *li* of fertile plain, with the rich fields of Pa and Shu to the south and the advantages of the pasture lands of the barbarians to the north. With three sides protected by natural barriers, one has only to worry about controlling the feudal lords to the east. So long as the feudal lords are at peace, tribute can be transported up the Yellow and Wei Rivers to supply the capital area in the west, and if the lords should revolt one can descend these same rivers and attack them, assured of an adequate supply of provisions. The area within the Pass is in fact one vast fortress of iron, a veritable storehouse created by nature. Therefore Liu Ching's advice is correct."

The same day the emperor mounted his carriage and began the journey west to make his capital within the Pass, Chang Liang accompanying him through the Pass. Because he suffered from frequent illness, Chang Liang practiced various austerities, eating no grain and not venturing out of his house for a year or more.

The emperor wished to remove the heir apparent [8] and set up Ju-i, the king of Chao, his son by Lady Ch'i, in his place. Many of the high ministers had strongly advised him against this, but they could not get

[7] I.e., to the left and right of the emperor if he were imagined as seated in his capital within the Pass and facing south.

[8] The emperor's son by Empress Lü. He later became Emperor Hui.

him once and for all to give up the idea. Empress Lü, fearful for the position of her son, was at a loss what to do, when someone reminded her that Chang Liang was very skillful at devising schemes and enjoyed the confidence of the emperor. She therefore sent Lü Tse,[9] the marquis of Chien-ch'eng, to threaten Chang Liang, saying, "You have always advised the emperor on matters of policy. Now the emperor is planning to change the heir apparent. How can you sit calmly by and let this happen?"

"In the past," replied Chang Liang, "when the emperor on a number of occasions found himself in difficulty, he was good enough to follow certain plans which I suggested. Now, however, the world is at peace. If, because of his love for Lady Ch'i, the emperor wishes to change his choice of heir apparent, this is a family matter. Nothing I or all the other ministers might say could have any effect."

But Lü Tse persisted. "You must think of some plan for us!"

"In this sort of affair mere arguments and reproaches are of little use," Chang Liang replied. "I recall, however, that there are four men in the world whom the emperor has not succeeded in attracting to his court. These four men are very old and, because they believe that the emperor is haughty and rude to others, they have hidden themselves away in the mountains and refused on principle to acknowledge any allegiance to the house of Han. Yet I know that the emperor admires them greatly. Now if you are willing to spare no expense in gold and precious gifts, you might have the heir apparent write them a letter offering in the humblest possible terms to send carriages to fetch them, and at the same time dispatch some artful talker to press the invitation. In that case I think they would come. If they came, you could entertain them as your guests and from time to time take them with you to court. The emperor will be sure to wonder who they are and ask about them. When he discovers that they are worthy men, this will help somewhat to strengthen the position of the heir apparent."

Empress Lü, adopting this plan, had Lü Tse send someone to fetch the four old men, bearing a letter from the heir apparent couched in terms of humility and according them the highest respect and courtesy.

[9] Lü Tse's name is apparently used here in error for that of his younger brother, Lü Shih-chih.

When the four arrived, they were entertained as guests at the home of Lü Tse.

In the eleventh year [196 B.C.] Ch'ing Pu revolted. Since the emperor himself was ill, he planned to send the heir apparent to lead the attack against him. The four old men said to one another, "We have come all this way simply to help protect the heir apparent. But if he is sent to lead the troops, the whole plan will be imperiled." Accordingly they advised Lü Tse, saying, "We hear that the heir apparent is to be sent to lead the troops. But even if he is victorious he cannot be given any position higher than that which he already holds, while if he returns without merit he will henceforth face grave misfortune. The other generals who will go with him on the expedition are all veteran commanders who fought with the emperor in the past to win possession of the empire. To put the heir apparent in command of a group of men such as this is like sending a lamb to lead a pack of wolves. None of them will be willing to do his best for such a leader, and the failure of the expedition will be assured. The saying goes, 'If the mother is loved, the child will be embraced.' Now Lady Ch'i day and night attends the emperor, and her son Ju-i is always with him in his arms. The emperor himself, they say, has sworn that 'no unworthy son shall ever hold a place above this beloved child.' Is this not clear proof that he intends to replace the heir apparent? You must hasten to Empress Lü and beg her to take advantage of some moment of leisure to appear before the emperor and plead with him in tears. She must tell him that Ch'ing Pu is known throughout the world as a fierce fighter and a master at arms, while the other generals who will go to fight against him are all comrades of the emperor from former days. To send the heir apparent to lead such a group would be no different from setting a lamb to lead wolves. They would never consent to obey his orders, and Ch'ing Pu, learning of the situation, would march fearlessly west to attack us. Although the emperor is ill, he must make an effort to rise and accompany the expedition in a transport carriage. Even though he is bedridden, so long as he is directing them the other generals will not dare to shirk their duties. She must beg him, at whatever pain, to do this much for his wife and child."

Lü Tse went at night to see the empress, who did as he advised,

appearing before the emperor in tears and repeating the words of the four old men. "It appears to me," the emperor replied, "that this worthless boy is not fit to be sent. Very well, then, I will go myself."

The emperor made preparations to lead the troops east himself; all the ministers who were to stay behind to guard the capital accompanied him as far as Pa-shang to see him off. Though Chang Liang was ill, he forced himself to get up and go to visit the emperor at Ch'ü-yu. "I should by right be accompanying you," he said, "but I am too sick. The men of Ch'u are very swift and nimble. I beg Your Majesty not to cross swords with them in person." Then before parting he advised the emperor, "It would be well to make the heir apparent a general of the army and put him in charge of the troops within the Pass."

"Although you are ill," replied the emperor, "I would like you to do as much as you can to instruct the heir apparent." Shu-sun T'ung was at this time grand tutor to the heir apparent, but because of the emperor's request Chang Liang undertook the duties of secondary tutor.

In the twelfth year of Han [195 B.C.] the emperor, having crushed Ch'ing Pu's army, returned to the capital. His illness had grown worse, and he was more than ever determined to change the heir apparent. Chang Liang counseled him against this, but he refused to listen and, because of his grave condition, ceased to attend to matters of state. Shu-sun T'ung also, as grand tutor, pleaded and argued, citing examples from ancient and recent history and begging that the present heir apparent be retained, though he knew that his stand might cost him his life. The emperor, although he had not altered his intention, finally pretended to give in.

It happened that a banquet was held and wine set out in the palace; the heir apparent waited upon the emperor and the four old men accompanied him. All of them were over eighty, with snow-white beards and eyebrows and arrayed in the most imposing caps and gowns. The emperor, struck with curiosity, asked who they were, whereupon each of them came forward and announced his name: "Master Tung-yüan," "Scholar Lu-li," "Ch'i Li-chi," "Master Hsia-huang."

"Gentlemen," the emperor replied in astonishment, "I have sought you for many years, but you have always hidden from me. How is it that you deign to come now and wait upon my son?"

"Your Majesty is contemptuous of others and given to cursing people," the four replied. "We did not consider it right to subject ourselves to insult, and therefore we were afraid and fled into hiding. But it came to our ears that the heir apparent was a man of kindness and reverence who loved others. The whole world, we heard, looked to him with yearning, and not a man but would give his life for him. Therefore we have come."

"If it is not too much trouble," said the emperor. "I hope you will be kind enough to look after the heir apparent and assist him."

The four men proposed a toast to the emperor's health and, when this was finished, rose and departed. The emperor stared after them and then, calling Lady Ch'i to his side, pointed to them and said, "I had hoped to change the heir apparent, but these four men have come to his aid. Like a pair of great wings they have borne him aloft where we cannot reach him. Empress Lü is your real master now!" Lady Ch'i wept.

"If you will do a dance of Ch'u for me," said the emperor, "I will make you a song of Ch'u," and he sang:

> The great swan soars aloft,
> In one swoop a thousand miles.
> He has spread his giant wings
> And spans the four seas.
> He who spans the four seas—
> Ah, what can we do?
> Though we bear stringed arrows to down him,
> Whereto should we aim them?

While Lady Ch'i sobbed and wept, the emperor sang the song through several times; then he rose and left the banquet. The fact that in the end the emperor did not change the heir apparent was due to the influence of these four men whom Chang Liang had originally summoned.

Chang Liang accompanied the emperor in his attack on Tai and devised the unusual plan by which the city of Ma-i was captured; later he was instrumental in having Hsiao Ho appointed prime minister. Chang Liang often freely discussed matters of state with the emperor, but since none of these were questions which vitally affected the existence of the empire I shall not go into them here.

"My family for generations served as ministers to the state of Hann," Chang Liang announced. "When Hann was destroyed, we spared no expense in rousing the world to revolt and avenging its fate upon the rapacious Ch'in. Now with the wagging of my meager tongue I have become teacher to an emperor, enfeoffed with ten thousand households and set among the ranks of the nobility. A common man can reach no greater heights; here I am content to rest. I wish now to lay aside the affairs of this world, and join the Master of the Red Pine [10] in immortal sport." He set about practicing dietary restrictions and breathing and stretching exercises to achieve levitation.

At the time of Kao-tsu's demise, Empress Lü, who was greatly indebted to Chang Liang, urged him to eat, saying, "Man's life in this world is as brief as the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall. Why should you punish yourself like this?" Chang Liang had no other recourse but to listen to her advice and begin eating again. Eight years later he died and was given the posthumous title of "Wen-ch'eng" or "Civil Accomplishment Marquis." His son Pu-i succeeded to the marquisate.

Thirteen years after Chang Liang had first met the old man on the embankment at Hsia-p'ei and had been given *The Book of the Grand Duke,* he was accompanying Kao-tsu through Chi-pei. There, at the foot of Mount Ku-ch'eng, just as the old man had said, he found a yellow stone, which he took away with him, treating it with the utmost reverence and worshiping it. When he died the stone was placed with him in the grave mound and in the sixth and twelfth months, when his descendants ascended the mound to pay their respects, they worshiped it. In the fifth year of Emperor Wen, Chang Liang's son Pu-i was accused of lese majesty and his territory taken away.

The Grand Historian remarks: Most scholars agree that there are no such things as ghosts and spirits, though they concede the existence of weird beings. What, I wonder, are we to make of the old man whom Chang Liang met and the book he gave him? Kao-tsu on a number of occasions found himself in grave difficulty, and yet Chang

[10] A legendary sage of ancient times who achieved immortality.

Liang always had a way out. Was this not the work of Heaven? The emperor himself admitted that "when it comes to sitting within the tents of command and devising strategies that will assure victory a thousand miles away, I am no match for Chang Liang." I had always imagined, therefore, that Chang Liang must have been a man of majestic stature and imposing appearance. And yet when I saw a picture of him, his face looked like that of a woman or a pretty young girl. Confucius once remarked, "If I had judged by looks alone I would have sadly mistaken Tzu-yü." The same might be said of Chang Liang.

Shih chi 56: The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Ch'en

With the six curious strategies of his devising, the other nobles were brought to submission and became followers of the Han, while in the overthrow of the Lü family he was the chief plotter, assuring in the end the safety of the dynasty's ancestral temples and the continuance of its altars of the soil and grain. Thus I made The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Ch'en.

Ch'en P'ing

Prime Minister Ch'en P'ing was a native of Hu-yu county in Yang-wu.[1] When he was young he loved to read books. His family was very poor and owned only thirty *mou*[2] of farm land. Ch'en P'ing lived alone with his older brother, who did all the work in the fields, leaving Ch'en P'ing free to pursue his studies as he wished. Ch'en P'ing was tall and very good-looking. Someone once remarked to him, "If your family is so poor, what in the world do you eat that you grow so big and plump?" Ch'en P'ing's older brother's wife, who was very put out that Ch'en P'ing did nothing to help the family finances, took it upon herself to answer. "And yet he eats nothing but husks and leavings like the rest of us!"[3] she exclaimed sarcastically. "Better to have no brother at all than one like this!" When Ch'en P'ing's older brother heard what his wife had said, he drove her out of the house and broke off the marriage.

After a while Ch'en P'ing reached the age for taking a wife himself. But since none of the wealthy families were willing to offer him their daughters, and since he was too proud to marry a girl from a poor family, time passed and he remained single. In Hu-yu there lived a rich old woman named Chang. This Dame Chang had a grand-

[1] In the region of Wei.

[2] The Han *mou* was equal to about 0.114 acre, so that the Ch'en family had less than 3½ acres.

[3] That is, he grows fat not by what he eats but because he does no work.

daughter who had married five times, but each time her husband had immediately died, so that no one dared to take her as a wife. Ch'en P'ing, however, decided that he wanted to marry her. It happened that there was a funeral in the city and Ch'en P'ing, being poor, acted as one of the hired attendants, helping out by arriving before the guests and leaving after the rest. Dame Chang noticed Ch'en P'ing at the funeral and was much impressed by his unusual good looks. Aware that he had attracted her attention, Ch'en P'ing purposely waited until the other guests had left before leaving, and when he did Dame Chang followed him to his house. His home was at the far end of a lane and backed against the city wall, with some old worn matting hung up for a gateway. Yet outside the gate were many tracks made by the sort of carriages ridden in by people of means.

When Dame Chang returned to her own home, she said to her son Chung, "I wish to marry my granddaughter to Ch'en P'ing."

"Ch'en P'ing is poor and does nothing to earn a living," objected her son. "Throughout the whole district people just laugh at his ways. Why should you want to marry this girl to him?"

"Anyone as good-looking as Ch'en P'ing will never stay poor and despised for long," said the old lady, and in the end she gave him the girl for a wife. Because Ch'en P'ing was so poor, she also lent him money to use for the betrothal gifts and sent him supplies of wine and meat for the wedding celebration. The old lady cautioned her granddaughter, saying, "You must never be inattentive in serving your husband just because he is poor! Treat his older brother as you would your father, and his brother's wife as you would your mother."

After Ch'en P'ing had married the daughter of the Chang family he found himself enjoying increasing prosperity and day by day broadened his circle of acquaintances. He was made steward of the local shrine and put in charge of the sacrifices, and he divided the sacrificial flesh among the worshipers with such fairness that the elders all remarked, "What an excellent steward young Ch'en is!" Ch'en P'ing sighed and said, "Ah, if I could only become steward of the empire I would divide it up in the same way as this flesh!"

When Ch'en She began his uprising and became king of Ch'en, he sent Chou Shih to seize and conquer the region at Wei and set up Wei

Chiu as king of Wei, encountering the Ch'in armies in an attack on Lin-chi. Ch'en P'ing had earlier taken leave of his older brother and gone with a group of young men to Lin-chi to serve the new king of Wei, who made Ch'en P'ing his master of carriage, but paid no attention to his suggestions. When someone slandered Ch'en P'ing to the king, he escaped and ran away. After some time, Hsiang Yü invaded the region and reached the Yellow River, whereupon Ch'en P'ing became a follower of his, accompanying him through the Pass to the destruction of Ch'in. He was awarded a noble rank for his services.

When Hsiang Yü returned east to rule from the city of P'eng-ch'eng and the king of Han marched back from his territory to conquer the three kingdoms of Ch'in, Ssu-ma Ang, the king of Yin, revolted against Hsiang Yü. Hsiang Yü gave Ch'en P'ing the title of lord of Hsin-wu and sent him to lead the followers of King Chiu of Wei who were in Ch'u in an attack on the king of Yin. The king of Yin surrendered and returned to the side of Hsiang Yü, whereupon Hsiang Yü sent Hsiang Han to make Ch'en P'ing a colonel and award him twenty pieces of gold. Before any time had passed, however, the king of Han attacked and won control of the region of Yin. Hsiang Yü was furious and set about to execute the generals and officers who were supposed to have conquered Yin for him. Ch'en P'ing, fearful that he would be among those executed, sealed up the gold which had been awarded him and sent it back by messenger to Hsiang Yü, while he himself, bearing only his sword, fled by a secret route into hiding.

As he was crossing the Yellow River, the boatman ferrying him began to wonder why such a fine, good-looking man should be traveling alone. Suspecting that he was a military leader in flight and would be likely to have gold or jewels or other precious goods concealed about his waist, he began to eye him with thoughts of murder. Ch'en P'ing, afraid of what the man might be thinking, stripped off his clothes until he was naked and began to help the boatman with his oar. The man realized then that Ch'en P'ing had nothing concealed on him, and gave up the idea of murder. Eventually Ch'en P'ing reached Hsiu-wu, where he surrendered to the king of Han.

Ch'en P'ing asked Wei Wu-chih to arrange an audience for him with the king of Han and as a result was summoned by the king. At this time Shih Fen (later known as "Lord Ten Thousand Piculs"), who was acting as page to the king of Han, took Ch'en P'ing's calling card and led him in to the interview. After Ch'en P'ing and six other guests at the interview had come forward and received gifts of food, the king announced, "You may return to your lodgings now."

"I have come on special business," said Ch'en P'ing, "and what I have to say cannot wait until another day." Accordingly the king began to converse with Ch'en P'ing and was much pleased with him. "What was your position under Hsiang Yü?' he asked. "I was a colonel," replied Ch'en P'ing. On the same day the king honored Ch'en P'ing with the rank of colonel, and made him one of his carriage attendants and a superintendent of the army. At this the other military leaders began to grumble vehemently. "The king gets hold of some runaway soldier from the army of Ch'u and, without knowing anything about his ability, he sets him by his side in the royal carriage and even makes him a supervisor over all of us who are his seniors!" But when the king heard what they were saying, he only continued to heap further honors on Ch'en P'ing.

Ch'en P'ing eventually accompanied him in the campaign against Hsiang Yü as far east as P'eng-ch'eng, where they were defeated by the Ch'u army and forced to retreat. The king gathered up his scattered forces and marched to Jung-yang, where he appointed Ch'en P'ing a lieutenant general under the command of Hsin, the king of Hann, and sent him to garrison Kuang-wu. Chou P'o, Kuan Ying, and others of the high officers all began to speak ill of Ch'en P'ing to the king of Han. "Ch'en P'ing is a handsome man," they said, "but good looks are like jeweled decorations on a hat—they do not necessarily indicate that there is anything inside! We have heard that while he was living at home he carried on in secret with his brother's wife. He went to serve the king of Wei but, when he could get nowhere there, he ran away and joined Hsiang Yü. And when he failed to make an impression on Hsiang Yü, he ran away again and came to join us. Today Your Majesty has honored him with a high position and put him in charge of the army. But we have heard that he is accepting money from the various generals—those who give a lot of money get good assignments, and those who give only a little get poor ones. As

a subject, Ch'en P'ing is fickle and corrupt. We beg you to look into the matter!"

The king of Han, his suspicions aroused, summoned Wei Wu-chih, who had first recommended Ch'en P'ing, and began to berate him. "I recommended the man because of his ability," Wei Wu-chih replied, "but now Your Majesty questions me on his behavior! Even the most shining examples of chaste and loyal behavior would be of no help in deciding our fate in battle, so why should Your Majesty trouble about such questions? The armies of Ch'u and Han are locked in stalemate. When I recommended this man for his ability to devise ingenious strategies, I was only considering whether or not his schemes could be of actual benefit to the state. Why should the fact that he slept with his brother's wife or took bribes be grounds for doubting his ability?"

The king of Han then sent for Ch'en P'ing and upbraided him. "I understand, Master Ch'en, that you served Wei until you found you could not get your way, and then you joined Hsiang Yü, but left him too. Now you have decided to follow along with my party. Don't you think you have changed your allegiance rather often?"

"I served the king of Wei," replied Ch'en P'ing, "but he was unwilling to listen to my advice. Therefore I left him and went to serve Hsiang Yü. But Hsiang Yü is incapable of trusting others. The only men he employs or shows favor to are members of the Hsiang family or relatives of his wife. Although he has clever strategists, he is unwilling to use them. Hence I left him too. Then I heard that the king of Han knew how to use men, and so I joined Your Majesty. I came here naked and alone. Had I not accepted money from others, I would have had nothing to keep alive on. If among the schemes and plans which I have to suggest there are any that are worthy of attention, I hope that Your Majesty will use them. If there are none of use to you, I beg to be allowed to seal and hand over all the money in my possession, relinquish my position, and take my leave."

With this the king of Han pardoned Ch'en P'ing and rewarded him with generosity, making him colonel of the guard with supervision over all the other generals. After this the other generals dared say no more against him.

Later Hsiang Yü pressed his attack on the king of Han, cutting off

the Han walled supply road and encircling the king in the city of Jung-yang. After some time had passed the king of Han, worried by the situation, offered to make peace on condition that he be allowed to retain possession of all the land west of Jung-yang, but Hsiang Yü refused to listen to such terms.

"When will this turmoil in the world ever come to an end?" the king of Han remarked to Ch'en P'ing.

Ch'en P'ing replied, "Hsiang Yü is by nature respectful and thoughtful of others. Hence the gentlemen of honor and integrity and the lovers of propriety all flock to his side. But when it comes to rewarding the achievements of others and conferring fiefs, he is too niggardly, and for this reason there are some men who will not stay with him. Your Majesty, on the other hand, is arrogant and unmindful of propriety, and therefore gentlemen of honor and integrity do not come to you. But because you are willing to enrich men with grants of territory, the dull and unscrupulous, the lovers of gain and the shameless all rush to your side. If only each of you could lay aside his shortcomings and build up his strong points, then the leadership of the world might be settled once for all. But because Your Majesty is so willful and insulting to others, it is impossible to win over men of honor and integrity!

"And yet there is a way to bring confusion to the Ch'u forces. Hsiang Yü has only a few honest and outspoken ministers such as Fan Tseng, Chung-li Mo, Lung Chü, and Chou Yin. Now if you were actually willing to part with twenty or thirty thousand catties of gold, I could tempt them to revolt, bring about dissension between the leader and his men, and cast suspicion upon their loyalty. Hsiang Yü is by nature mistrustful and wary of others and quick to give credit to slanderous talk, so that he is sure to start executing the men within his own camp. Then you may raise the Han forces and attack from without and the defeat of the Ch'u army will be certain!"

The king of Han, considering the idea a reasonable one, gave Ch'en P'ing a sum of forty thousand catties of yellow gold to use as he wished, making no further inquiry about the matter. Ch'en P'ing used a large part of the money to create dissension within the Ch'u army, sending a message to Chung-li Mo and the various other generals pointing out

that, though they had won great merit in the service of Hsiang Yü, they had in the end never been awarded grants of territory or become kings. He urged them to join forces with the Han to overthrow the Hsiang family and divide up its territory among themselves. As Ch'en P'ing had expected, Hsiang Yü became suspicious and began to mistrust Chung-li Mo and the others.

Hsiang Yü's suspicions had already been aroused when he happened to send an envoy to the Han camp. The king of Han had a meal of all sorts of fancy dishes prepared and brought in but, upon seeing the envoy, he pretended to be thoroughly startled and said, "I supposed you were the envoy from Fan Tseng, but I see that you have come from Hsiang Yü!" He then had the feast taken away and a meal of coarse food brought in and served to the envoy. The envoy returned and reported all that had happened to Hsiang Yü who, as Ch'en P'ing had hoped, grew deeply suspicious of Fan Tseng. Fan Tseng wished to make an immediate attack upon the city of Jung-yang but Hsiang Yü, because of his mistrust, refused to listen to this idea. When Fan Tseng heard that Hsiang Yü suspected his loyalty, he became very angry. "The affairs of the world have been largely settled," he said. "You must manage things for yourself, my lord. I beg to be relieved of my duties and allowed to go home!" His request was granted but, before he reached P'eng-ch'eng, an ulcerous sore broke out on his back and he died.

Later Ch'en P'ing sent some two thousand women of Jung-yang out of the city gates at night and, while the Ch'u forces were rushing to attack them, he and the king of Han slipped out by the west gate and made their escape. Eventually they reentered the Pass, gathered together more forces, and marched east again.

The following year Han Hsin conquered Ch'i and set himself up as king of Ch'i, sending an envoy to the king of Han to have his title confirmed. The king of Han was furious and began to curse the envoy, but Ch'en P'ing restrained him by stepping on his foot as a hint, and when the king realized the pointlessness of such behavior, he received the envoy with generosity and eventually dispatched Chang Liang to go and confirm Han Hsin in his title of king of Ch'i. Ch'en P'ing he enfeoffed with the district of Hu-yu and, by employing his

ingenious schemes and strategies, was eventually able to destroy Hsiang Yü. Later, in his usual capacity of colonel of the guard, Ch'en P'ing accompanied the king of Han, now emperor, in his campaign to put down Tsang Tu, the king of Yen.

In the sixth year of Han someone reported to the emperor that Han Hsin, who had been transferred from the position of king of Ch'i to that of king of Ch'u, was planning revolt. Emperor Kao-tsu consulted his generals, who unanimously replied, "Send troops at once to butcher the villain!" The emperor was silent for a while and then summoned Ch'en P'ing and asked his opinion. Ch'en P'ing firmly declined to answer, but asked instead, "What do the generals say?" When the emperor had told him their opinion, he asked, "Is it known that someone has sent in a report accusing Han Hsin of revolt?"

"Not yet," replied the emperor.

"Does Han Hsin himself know?"

"No, he is unaware of it."

"Who has finer soldiers, Your Majesty or Han Hsin?" asked Ch'en P'ing.

"Mine are no better than his," said the emperor.

"And Your Majesty's generals—are they superior to Han Hsin in leading their men?"

"They are no match for him!"

"So our troops are not as well trained as his, and our generals are inferior. Yet if we were to call out our forces and attack him, this would be deliberately inciting him to battle. In my humble opinion, it would be a dangerous course for Your Majesty to take!" said Ch'en P'ing.

"Then what should we do?" asked the emperor.

"In ancient times the Son of Heaven used to go on royal tours and meet with his nobles. In the south there is a lake called Yün-meng. Your Majesty has only to pretend to set out on a pleasure trip to Yün-meng and arrange for the nobles to meet you at Ch'en. Ch'en is on the western border of Ch'u, so that when Han Hsin hears that the Son of Heaven is making a harmless pleasure trip, he will under the circumstances undoubtedly consider it quite safe to journey to the border to greet you. Then, when he comes to visit, you may take him

prisoner. In this way you will have only one strong man to deal with instead of an army."

The emperor approved of the plan and proceeded to send envoys to the feudal lords instructing them to meet him at Ch'en, "since I shall be journeying south to Yün-meng." The emperor set out immediately afterward but, before he reached Ch'en, Han Hsin, as he had anticipated, came to meet him along the way. The emperor had prepared his guards beforehand and, when Han Hsin arrived, ordered them to seize and bind him and place him in the rear carriage. Han Hsin sighed and said, "Now that the world has been conquered, I suppose it is time that I be boiled alive!"

The emperor turned to look back at him. "Keep quiet, you!" he called. "It is clear you were plotting a revolt!" Then the guards tied Han Hsin's hands behind his back and the emperor proceeded to his meeting with the nobles at Ch'en and brought the region of Ch'u back to order again.

When he returned to Lo-yang he pardoned Han Hsin and made him marquis of Huai-yin. It was at this time that he awarded his meritorious ministers the split tallies of formal enfeoffment and settled their grants of territory. To Ch'en P'ing he awarded the split tallies to be passed on from generation to generation without end, making him marquis of Hu-yu, but Ch'en P'ing declined to accept, saying, "I have done nothing to merit this."

"By using your plans and strategies, Master Ch'en," said the emperor, "I won victory in battle and overcame my enemies. If this is not an achievement of merit, what is it?"

"But if it had not been for Wei Wu-chih," said Ch'en P'ing, "how would I ever have been recommended to Your Majesty?"

"You are the sort people mean when they say, 'He never forgets his old friends'!" said the emperor and proceeded to reward Wei Wu-chih as well.

The following year Ch'en P'ing in his capacity as colonel of the guard accompanied the emperor in an attack upon the rebellious King Hsin of Hann in Tai. When they finally reached P'ing-ch'eng they were surrounded by the Hsiung-nu and for seven days were unable to obtain food. Emperor Kao-tsu, following an ingenious plan suggested

by Ch'en P'ing, sent an envoy to the consort of the *Shan-yü*.[4] The siege was finally raised and Kao-tsu managed to escape. The exact plan used was secret so that nowadays no one knows just what it was.

When Kao-tsu was on his way south again he passed through Ch'ü-ni. Ascending the city walls and gazing out over the vast number of its houses, he exclaimed, "What a splendid district town this is! In all my travels about the empire I have seen nothing to compare with this outside of Lo-yang."

Then he turned to his secretary and asked, "What is the population of Ch'ü-ni?"

"Originally, during the time of Ch'in, it had over thirty thousand households," replied the secretary. "But since then, what with the frequent uprisings, many of the inhabitants have fled or gone into hiding so that now there are actually only five thousand households." With this the emperor ordered his secretary to transfer Ch'en P'ing to the position of marquis of Ch'ü-ni, receiving the revenue from the entire city, and to remove him from his former fief of Hu-yu.

Ch'en P'ing continued as before to serve as colonel of the guard, accompanying the emperor in his attacks against Ch'en Hsi and Ch'ing Pu. He is said to have devised in all six ingenious strategies, for each of which he was at once awarded additional grants of cities, so that his feudal holdings were six times enlarged. Some of the strategies were kept strictly secret, however, so that nowadays there is no way of determining what they were.

Kao-tsu, returning from his campaign to crush Ch'ing Pu, fell ill of a wound he had received and had to proceed to the capital at Ch'ang-an by slow stages. When word came that Lu Wan, the king of Yen, had revolted, he appointed Fan K'uai as prime minister of Yen and sent him to lead an army against the rebels. After Fan K'uai had departed, however, someone began to speak badly of him. The emperor, believing the slander, was in a rage. "Fan K'uai saw that I am ill, and now he is hoping I will die!" he declared. On the advice of Ch'en P'ing, he summoned Chou P'o, the marquis of Chiang, to his bedside and delivered these instructions: "Ch'en P'ing is to hasten at

[4] *Shan-yü* was the title of the Hsiung-nu chieftain. The word is said to mean "broad and great."

once by relay carriage with Chou P'o, who will replace Fan K'uai as commander. When Ch'en P'ing reaches the camp, he is to decapitate Fan K'uai on the spot!"

Ch'en P'ing and Chou P'o, having received the imperial command, set off in haste by relay carriage, but before they had reached the place where the army was camped, they began to discuss the matter between themselves as they went along. "Fan K'uai," they said, "is an old friend of the emperor and has won great merit. Moreover he is the husband of Empress Lü's younger sister Lü Hsü. He enjoys great intimacy with the imperial family as well as high position. It is only because the emperor is in a rage that he wants to cut off Fan K'uai's head, and in all probability he will regret it later. It would be better to make Fan K'uai a prisoner and bring him before the emperor. Then the emperor may carry out the punishment in person."

Accordingly, before they had reached the camp they halted and constructed an altar and, bearing the imperial credentials, summoned Fan K'uai. Fan K'uai appeared and accepted the emperor's command, whereupon his hands were bound behind his back and he was placed in a caged cart and sent by relay to Ch'ang-an. By the same order Chou P'o took his place as commander with instructions to lead the army in reconquering the districts of Yen which were in revolt.

While Ch'en P'ing was on his way back to the capital, he received word that Emperor Kao-tsu had passed away. Fearful that Empress Lü and her sister Lü Hsü, when they found out what had happened, would be angry and try to slander him, he hastened on ahead of Fan K'uai by relay carriage. Along the way he met an envoy bearing an imperial order for Ch'en P'ing and Kuan Ying to proceed to the garrison at Jung-yang. Ch'en P'ing accepted the order but at once resumed his journey until he reached the palace, where he wept with profound grief for the deceased emperor and then, from his place before the coffin, reported to Empress Lü what had taken place. Empress Lü felt sorry for him and said, "Very well. You may go now." But Ch'en P'ing was afraid that if he went away he would become the victim of slander and so he earnestly begged that he be given a

position in the palace guards. Empress Lü accordingly made him a palace attendant and said, "You must act as tutor and instruct the new emperor." After this, although Lü Hsü attempted to defame him, she was able to accomplish nothing. When Fan K'uai arrived in the capital he was pardoned and restored to his former position and title.

In the sixth year of Emperor Hui, Prime Minister Ts'ao Ts'an died, and for this reason Wang Ling, the marquis of An-kuo, was made chancellor of the right and Ch'en P'ing chancellor of the left.

Wang Ling

Wang Ling was a native of P'ei and was originally one of the most powerful men in the district. When Kao-tsu was still a commoner he treated Wang Ling like an older brother. Wang Ling had little education but was high spirited and fond of speaking his mind.

Later, when Kao-tsu began his uprising in P'ei and made his way to the capital at Hsien-yang, Wang Ling gathered together his own band of several thousand men. He stayed in the region of Nan-yang, however, and was unwilling to become a follower of Kao-tsu. It was only later, after Kao-tsu had become king of Han and returned east to attack Hsiang Yü, that he took his forces and placed them under Kao-tsu's command.

Hsiang Yü seized Wang Ling's mother and held her captive in the midst of his camp. When an envoy arrived from Wang Ling, Hsiang Yü seated Wang Ling's mother in the place of honor facing east, hoping by such favorable treatment to induce Wang Ling to come over to his side. When the envoy was leaving, Wang Ling's mother, who had come to take her leave of him in private, wept and said, "There is something I want you to tell my son for me. Let him serve the king of Han with all diligence, for the king of Han is a worthy man. He must not be of two minds on my account! See, I send off his envoy with the gift of my death!" And with this she stabbed herself with a sword and died. Hsiang Yü was enraged and had her body boiled. In the end Wang Ling joined the king of Han in conquering the empire but, because he was good friends with Yung Ch'ih,

who was an old enemy of Kao-tsu, and because he originally had not shown any inclination to join Kao-tsu, he was not enfeoffed until rather late, being made marquis of An-kuo.

Two years after Wang Ling took office as chancellor of the right, Emperor Hui passed away. Empress Lü, who wanted to set up the members of her own family as kings, asked Wang Ling's opinion, but he replied, "That cannot be done!" When she asked Ch'en P'ing's opinion, however, he said there was no objection. Irritated at Wang Ling, the empress pretended to promote him by making him grand tutor to the emperor,[5] but in fact she ceased to pay any more attention to him. Wang Ling angrily resigned from his position on grounds of illness, shut the gates of his house, and no longer appeared at court functions. He died in the seventh year of Empress Lü's reign.

Shen I-chi

After Wang Ling resigned as chancellor of the right, Empress Lü transferred Ch'en P'ing to the position of chancellor of the right and appointed Shen I-chi, the marquis of Pi-yang, to Ch'en P'ing's former position of chancellor of the left. The chancellor of the left, however, did not use the government offices, but conducted his affairs from the palace itself.

Shen I-chi was also a native of P'ei. When Kao-tsu was defeated at P'eng-ch'eng and forced to flee west, Hsiang Yü seized his father and Empress Lü and held them as hostages. Shen I-chi at this time acted as their attendant and waited on Empress Lü. Later he accompanied Kao-tsu in the final defeat of Hsiang Yü and was made a marquis. He enjoyed great favor with Empress Lü and, when he became chancellor and attended her in the palace, all the other officials were obliged to go through him before they could get anything done.

Lü Hsü, the empress's young sister, on a number of occasions spoke ill of Ch'en P'ing because he had once in the past plotted the arrest of her husband, Fan K'uai, for Emperor Kao-tsu. "Since Ch'en P'ing became chancellor, he pays no attention to his duties," she declared, "but spends his days drinking fine wines and dallying with women!"

[5] The child whom Empress Lü put on the throne after the death of her son, Emperor Hui. She herself continued as before to wield the actual power.

Ch'en P'ing, aware of what was being said of him, only indulged himself more openly each day. When Empress Lü heard of this she was secretly pleased,[6] but for the sake of appearances she questioned him about the things which Lü Hsü was saying. "The proverb has it that 'what comes from the mouths of women and children is not worth listening to'," she said. "All that matters is how you get along with me! You need have no fear of Lü Hsü's slander."

When Empress Lü proposed setting up members of her family as kings, Ch'en P'ing pretended to agree with the idea but, after the empress had passed away, he joined with the grand commandant Chou P'o in the plot whereby they eventually overthrew the Lü family and set up Emperor Wen the Filial. Ch'en P'ing was in fact the originator of the plot. Shen I-chi resigned from his position of chancellor of the left.

After Emperor Wen came to the throne Ch'en P'ing, considering that Chou P'o had won signal merit by personally leading the army in the overthrow of the Lü family, wished to yield the place of honor to him and so he pleaded illness and resigned. Emperor Wen, who had just ascended the throne, was suspicious of Ch'en P'ing's protestations of illness and questioned him. "While Kao-tsu was living," replied Ch'en P'ing, "Chou P'o did not win as much merit as I, but in the overthrow of the Lü family my merit is no match for his. Therefore I wish to yield the position of chancellor of the right to him." Emperor Wen accordingly made Chou P'o the chancellor of the right, ranking first among the officials, and transferred Ch'en P'ing to the secondary rank of chancellor of the left. He awarded Ch'en P'ing a thousand catties of gold and increased his fief by three thousand households.

A short while later, when Emperor Wen had grown somewhat accustomed to handling affairs of state, he one day at court asked Chou P'o, the chancellor of the right, "How many law cases are there in the empire in one year?"

"I do not know," replied Chou P'o apologetically.

"And what is the annual revenue and expenditure of the government in currency and grain?" asked the emperor.

[6] Because he was not attempting to exercise his authority but leaving everything to her favorite, Shen I-chi.