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LEGITIMATION OF CHINESE IMPERIAL REGIMES

INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

The conference on legitimation of Chinese imperial regimes aimed, first, at uncovering the legitmating principles of such regimes and, second, at improving or refining the concept of legitimation. The emphasis was to be on legitimation, not simply legitimacy because we were interested in the process by which legitimacy is attained. We assumed that the most revealing cases would be those of dynastic founders, for under those circumstances the process of developing legitimacy would be most evident. Legitimation is, however, an ongoing process and the need to establish and maintain legitimacy is not limited to the founding of a particular regime. Although we devote some attention to that issue, we conclude that it deserves far more extensive treatment than we were able to accord it.

The papers in this volume indicate that there was not unanimity among the conference participants on the nature of legitimation; they reflect a comparable lack of agreement among political scientists and political sociologists on the nature of legitimation and the best ways to approach problems of legitimacy. Rather than try to impose a single viewpoint on the authors of the papers, I have tried a different approach, namely, writing interpretive introductions to the papers, consistently applying a single model of legitimation. When writing these introductory comments it became apparent that the case studies presented here could have been increased in order to introduce additional data. Hence, I have not limited my comments to the data in the papers presented at the conference. I am also well aware, as were the conference participants, that the topic has not been exhausted, but we feel that an important beginning has been made to a significant subject.

In these comments, I draw upon the perceptive analytical structure developed by David Easton in *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. Easton identifies and elaborates three sources of legitimation: ideological, structural and personal. I use his categories with some modifications.

Ideology

The ideological source of legitimacy is the most obvious and is usually seen as the most important. But, particularly for very early periods, the applicability of this category is dubious. Max Weber's well-known trichotomy of sources of legitimation includes "traditional" which Easton feels is but an example of ideological legitimacy, and Easton therefore subsumes it in the latter type of source. Our case studies suggest, however, that Easton was too hasty (or too inclined to base his arguments on the modern, Western world). There is still room in our thinking for Weber's notion of the traditional mode of legitimation in which the answer to the question, Why are things this way? or, more specifically, why are these men in positions of authority? or why is the polity structured in this way? is "Because they have always been that way." We can put this another way, viz., ideology had to be discovered, and before that discovery we are justified in speaking of tradition as a source of legitimation even though the line between the two is a very fine one.

The Shang period is an example of what we might term a pre-ideological age. The relevant source materials that we have are admittedly few in number and of a peculiar nature in that they are essentially religious in tone. Those materials reveal a world view, a meaningful order, within which the Shang rulers governed their realm. But the Shang rulers seem to have thought of their realm as an extension of the family and the family needs no ideological justification or validation. Furthermore, all ideologies feature a moral viewpoint, among other characteristics, but one of the most striking qualities of the oracle bone inscriptions is the absence of moral statements or assumptions. Although we lack sufficient data to mount a firm argument, we can speculate that the issue of ideological legitimation was not consciously dealt with in the Shang period. We are left with the notion that our "why" question would have been answered in the Shang period with "because things have always been this way." There is, to be sure, a hint of intellectual tensions within the late Shang world that might have engendered dialectical forces leading to the development of ideological considerations.

The earliest example of ideology as a set of ideas that reflect aspirations while providing authorities with ideas that were manipulable by the elite appears in the famous concept of the Mandate of Heaven, traditionally associated with the rise of the Chou dynasty in the eleventh century B.C. (our conference did not include a participant who worked on this era or this topic). But the Mandate of Heaven did little more than introduce a moral obligation on the part of rulers and diminish relatively the patrimonial element of governance by asserting a broader socio-political concern than that of the state as family.

Even as late as the founding of the Ch'in and Han dynasties, we do not see evidence of an articulated ideology. The Ch'in creator of the imperium, it is important to note, had already ruled for nearly twenty years as the king of Ch'in, continuing a well-established family tradition, before becoming emperor. The magnitude of the change from kingdom to empire perhaps weighs more heavily on us than it did on the last Ch'in king, i.e., the First Emperor. In his era there was no ideology of empire, and his empire did not last long enough that he had to confront the issue of creating an ideology to legitimate his empire.

The founder of the Han dynasty, not renowned for his intellectual sophistication, likewise did not feel compelled to articulate or have articulated an ideology. There is, nevertheless, an implicit ideology in the empire that he created. It contains elements that we associate with Confucianism, Taoism and Legalism, but probably most importantly his reestablishment of kingdoms reminiscent of the pre-Ch'in political structure of China constituted a manifest commitment to the past, to a familiar world in which many would feel comfortable because their perceived meaningful order had been restored. Under Kao-tsu's Former Han successors, a heavily Confucianized ideology was formed--an ideology that was a major source of legitimacy for most regimes in Chinese history.

Wang Mang, a much maligned "usurper" according to many accounts of Chinese history, was the first Confucian founder of a Chinese dynasty. He and those who struggled among themselves for control of China after his death provide us with the earliest clear examples of dynastic founders (or would-be founders) who fully appreciated the role of ideology in legitimating their regimes. The age of Wang Mang and the founding of Later Han mark an important break in the history of ideology as a source of legitimation in Chinese history. Ideologies before this time were either not articulated or, at best, poorly articulated. The qualitative differences in the assumptions pertaining to ideology between this period and all earlier ones suggest very strongly that we are indeed justified in resuscitating Weber's idea of tradition as a factor in legitimation. The discovery of ideology provided the elite with an important weapon in their political arsenal. To subsume tradition under the ideological rubric and to dismiss it as but one

example of ideology is to obscure the discovery of the importance of ideology and of man's concern thereafter to shape consciously the perceptions of others in order to facilitate domination over those others.

We are so accustomed to thinking of imperial China as Confucian China that we tend to overlook other isms that were also used as sources of ideological legitimation. Richard Mather has published an article on K'ou Ch'ien-chih in which Mather reveals a fifth century A.D. (Northern Wei) attempt to legitimate an established regime on the basis of Taoist revelatory texts. Another example is that of T'ang Hsüan-tsung, who, building on earlier imperial support for Taoism in the T'ang period, attempted to elevate Taoism, in part on the basis of textual interpretations provided by the emperor himself, to the level of state orthodoxy. Buddhism was also used on numerous occasions as an ideologically legitimating device. Studies of Empress Wu Tse-t'ien deal with Buddhism as a feature of her seizure and maintenance of power.

These superficially non-Confucian ideologies are significant for at least four reasons. First, none of them was wholly non-Confucian. The Taoism of the Northern Wei, although allegedly revealed by Lao-tzu himself, was both symbolically and substantively rich in Confucian lore. Many of the ideas pertaining to talismans, omens, and *lu* (registers) derive directly from Han Confucianism. Furthermore, many of the social and political ideas present within the texts revealed to K'ou Ch'ien-chih are best described as Confucian social and political ideas that would appeal directly to the elite of North China. Similarly, T'ang Hsüan-tsung's commentary on the Lao-tzu was intended to inculcate Confucian hierarchical (and Legalist political) ideas in an elite that the emperor felt had strayed too far from the kind of respect and power that he deserved. Furthermore, as Guisso's study of Wu Tse-t'ien indicates, the commentary to the Great Cloud Sutra drew very heavily on fundamental Chinese and particularly Confucian ideas, that is, the sutra was explained politically in non-Buddhist and certainly non-Indian terms. Thus, in even the most non-Confucian eras and documents, there was a fundamental core that was quintessential Confucianism.

Second, these changes in ideology seem to have had no significant consequence regarding the effective political power of the authorities in general or the rulers in particular of these regimes. I say "seem to have had no significant consequence" because the papers concerned did not address this issue directly, but for the sake of argument let us assume that the statement is valid. All three cases (Northern Wei, Empress Wu, and mid-T'ang) are of relatively short-lived attempts to produce ideological changes, and it is possible that the brevity of the experiments make definitive statements impossible. But what we can note is that T'ang Hsüan-tsung's reforms failed because the scholarly world refused to accept his offers to enter officialdom via a Taoist route; the educated elite simply did not respond positively to his attempt to create a Taoist (or semi-Taoist) orthodoxy. What this suggests is that the elite may have feared that had he succeeded they would have found their own positions weakened; that is, one of the emperor's main concerns was to enhance his own power at the expense of that of officialdom. Their passive reaction to his offers forced him to abolish his reforms. These events can be read to indicate that had the emperor succeeded in introducing a new ideology it would have had a major impact on the exercise of power, or so the elite thought to be the case.

Third, ideology is perhaps not as important as it is often made out to be. If we accept the notion that the changes in ideology carried out in the Northern Wei and by Empress Wu did not significantly alter the power of those rulers, then that suggests that structural legitimacy (see below) is relatively more important than ideological, at least in the day-to-day operation of the political system. This is not to say that under very different circumstances ideology might not be much more important. For example, one

way of conceiving of early twentieth century China is that the country lacked an ideology that either reflected the hopes and aspirations of the populace or that could be manipulated by the elite to mobilize people towards desirable goals. The paralysis of ideological want prevented effective action at all levels. Under these circumstances, structural legitimacy is impossible to attain and priority must be given ideological legitimation as the determinative element. But under conditions in which there has not been a complete breakdown of the meaningful order, ideological legitimation is probably far less important than the other two types. Our studies show that ideology is much more important in sustaining regimes than in founding them.

Fourth, the emphasis on religious ideas of Buddhism and Taoism in the Period of Disunion and in the T'ang (and in later periods as well, but we do not go into them) provides an occasion to make a comparison between Chinese and Western historical developments. Ideological legitimation at its core deals with the most basic ideas of man, and Western man's most basic ideas were religious. Mankind could hold firm to those ideas and remain relatively secure, for those ideas provided him with the ultimate sense of order. He might not understand why God sometimes acted as He did, but he was secure in the notion that God's will was good and that the universe, because it was created by God, had an order and a meaning. With that faith in the ultimate order of God, man could afford to make or tolerate changes in the socio-political order, for he knew that the real world, the ultimate reality would not be in jeopardy. Such was not the case in China. In spite of a variety of religions and gods (and perhaps because of the variety), the truly meaningful order in China was man-made, and just as man had made the order so man was capable of upsetting it and causing near total chaos. Dynastic collapse and dynastic restructuring were both products of human activities, frailties and heroics. Accordingly, the emphasis tended to be on human institutions--on their preservation or restoration--and the model was the family writ large (see below). Hence, in those periods when religion seemed to occupy a relatively important position in Chinese history the impact of those religious trends or ideas on ideological legitimation was usually slight. These remarks are aimed at highlighting differences in degrees, not absolute differences. Religious elements were present in ideological legitimation throughout Chinese history. To offer just a few of many possible examples, in the Han, Confucius as a demigod, was made the creator of Han institutions; in the Sung, the *T'ien-shu* (Heavenly Texts) were created as a means of proving that the Sung ruling house had been chosen by Heaven to govern China (even though the Sung did not then govern all of China), and in the Ch'ing, Manchu emperors ruled as reincarnations of the bodhisattva Manjusri. The variety of religious images against a prevailing humanistically oriented Confucian background suggest the extent to which these images were augmentative but not central to ideological legitimation. There is an important question not answered by these observations, viz., in what ways did these religious commitments, symbols, and images enhance the power of the Chinese imperium? Or, conversely, to what extent can the power of the Chinese throne be attributed to the fact that the core element of ideological legitimation was not religious?

By Sung times a stable pattern of ideological legitimation had emerged that was to endure until the end of the imperial period. Unlike many modern ideologies which contain a major and at times even dominating element of nationalism, the late traditional pattern in China focused attention on Confucian values which were not bound ethnically or nationalistically. Racism was not unknown, but neither was it a major political factor. Conquest rulers such as the Jurchen or the Manchus could avail themselves of this ideology and rule China or parts of it with as much legitimacy as a Chinese regime. Although some of the Chinese elite initially objected to Manchu rule, for example, on ethnic grounds, by the nineteenth century when the elements at the heart of Chinese civilization were perceived as jeopardized by the Taiping movement the Manchus were supported because of their continuing commitment to upholding traditional ideology.

The Mongols stand out as an important exception to the foregoing generalizations. They never fully accepted the more secularized traditional Chinese ideology; instead, in China Mongol rulers were committed to ideas that were not shared by their Chinese subjects--ideas that, so far as most Chinese were concerned, did not aid in legitimating Mongol rule in China. On the other hand, Mongol structural sources of legitimacy drew heavily on the Chinese model (see below). Thus, the Mongol Yuan dynasty evinces a mixed legitimacy picture. The Mongols themselves felt most comfortable and secure with their religiously inspired ideology whereas the Chinese could easily accept the structural aspects of Mongol legitimacy. The case indicates the degree to which each can stand remarkably independent of the other, but the relative independence of each from the other may well have been a contributing factor in the brevity of the Mongol rule in China.

Structural Sources of Legitimation

In Easton's formulation, structural sources of legitimacy are very powerful factors in legitimating a regime. When the structure is seen as conforming to the values and norms of the regime, then not only will those who occupy authority roles within the structure be seen as legitimate in their exercise of power, but the structures themselves have an independent effect upon the legitimacy of the regime (Easton, *Life*, 298-301 and 204-211).

Structural legitimation, in several ways, is as important as ideological legitimation. For example, in any given society many people are either unmoved by or unaware of ideology, (which is not to say that under certain circumstances they could not be either moved or made aware), but once a political structure is accepted in a society then the structure itself has legitimating powers. The structure and its norms become the objects of attachment by members of the society (Easton, *Life*, 300). Quite independently of the ideology, the structure validates, legitimates, and even sanctifies policies and personnel. The authorities who act on behalf of the members of the society or who dominate them, have their roles legitimated because they are part of that structure and act in accord with its norms. Conversely, one may conceive of a case in which the legitimacy of a regime has been called into question, but an authority, because he abides by the norms of the original regime and because he came to his position in a manner compatible with the norms of that regime, will still be considered as legitimate. In sum, legitimation may depend in a highly autonomous way, i.e., remarkably independent of the ideology, on either the structures themselves or on the authorities themselves.

Our earliest case of legitimation, the Shang, reveals no explicit ideology but it does demonstrate some important aspects of structural legitimacy, particularly those that are associated with ritual and symbol. Shang authorities validated their every move by recourse to divination, and the process of divination was apparently a crucially important component in the procedures of the regime. The authorities were legitimated in their political actions by virtue of their adherence to these established norms. The original legitimation of the regime itself is presently lost to us--the extant data simply will not allow a reconstruction of that early period of Shang history. At the opposite end of the period of Shang domination we have at least hints of major changes that were occurring in the thinking patterns of the world of the elite. Ritual matters came to be handled in a more routinized manner, reflecting thereby a loss of vitality and immediacy in the implicit ideology of the regime. It is likely that we are witnessing dimly a significant change in the religious aspects of patrimonialism, but not in patrimonialism itself. That is, the Shang polity is best conceived of as a patrimonial regime in which both the structure and ideology derive from the social and religious verities of the family; the secularization identified by

Professor Keightley as a feature of late Shang diminished the religious but not the social importance of the family. The social character of the family, in turn, provided the basic political value for most subsequent regimes in Chinese history (not, however, without changes both in the value itself and in the socio-economic milieu in which it operated).

The greatest shock to Chinese structural sources of legitimation, before the twentieth century, occurred with the rise of the Ch'in empire, but the Ch'in empire also continued to draw upon established structural sources of legitimation. To take up the latter point first: there was much in the Ch'in empire that was not new, startling or shocking. For example, most of the basic values derived from the values common to the various states of the north China plain; above all, these basic values included the fundamental notion of filial piety. (One should note, although the point is not developed in the paper on the Ch'in, that most of the central government offices of the Ch'in derive from a patrimonial concept of the state, not from a functional analysis of bureaucratic responsibilities). Even such an important feature of structural legitimation as the law was shared by many (and probably, all) of the states that the Ch'in conquered. Thus, the Ch'in authorities had some powerful factors operating in their favor, factors which by themselves might well have led to a full acceptance of the Ch'in and a long-lived dynasty.

But, there were also structural factors in the Ch'in case which were not conducive to a dynasty of longevity. Foremost among these, was the obliteration of the other states. Although Ch'in Shih Huang-ti attempted to defend his conquest of the other states on the ground that each of them had violated legally binding agreements with the Ch'in, it is clear from the rising tone of contemporaneous stele inscriptions that Ch'in Shih Huang-ti and his ministers felt themselves more and more on the defensive in maintaining this position. That is, there was apparently continuing dissatisfaction, not with the Ch'in empire per se, but with the end of the states to which people had belonged. The Ch'in conquest shattered a world view in which every person belonged to a particular political entity; the meaningful order to which subjects of Ch'i, Yen, Ch'u and the other states belonged had been eliminated--a long familiar structural order had disappeared and the new one was not yet securely in place. Furthermore, the Ch'in regime lacked an ideology to which it could appeal in attracting the support of its new subjects. The charges brought against the Ch'in, e.g., heavy handed administration of justice, exorbitant taxes, and unremitting corvee obligations (served long distances from home), were perhaps the immediate catalysts for action (and have probably been exaggerated). What mattered most, I would suggest, was Ch'in Shih Huang-ti's attack on the political nomos. An attack of this order of magnitude without a countervailing ideology which would inspire confidence in the new regime probably assured the failure of the Ch'in effort.

The founder of the Han dynasty was sufficiently astute to appreciate the mistake that the Ch'in rulers had made in abolishing the pre-imperial states. Accordingly, he restored them, albeit without reinstalling the ruling families in those states. The Han founder thus created an empire while allowing the continuation of local identities, thereby restoring more than a mere shadow of the old political order. His successors, of course, were to diminish both the size of the kingdoms and the autonomy of the kings, but kingdoms as a symbolic reflection of the old order were to last through and beyond the Han dynasty.

In other respects, Han Kao-tsu's regime was not strikingly different from Ch'in Shih Huang-ti's. There was less emphasis placed on law, initially at least, but the structure and values of the Han were not significantly different from the short-lived structure before it. With the passage of decades and then generations, the regime and its authorities were fully accepted. Indeed, the attachments to them may ultimately have been dysfunctional, for as socio-economic pressures developed in the latter part of the Former Han period, efforts at reform were inhibited by the inertia of the structure itself.

Wang Mang sought to break the restraints of the old structure and to institute a new order, but it was an order based upon Wang Mang's understanding of ancient, i.e., pre-imperial, China. Under the influence of the *Chou-li* and what Wang Mang conceived life in the Chou period to have been like, Wang sought to introduce into Chinese life the values of an earlier era, values that were present in the Confucian classics but which had never been fully accepted in Han life. Thus, Wang violated the contemporaneous values in order to recreate better, more classical values that in turn would lead to a better life. Similarly, the increasingly bureaucratic norms of the Han were to be cast aside in favor of the imagined norms of the ancient period. The names of offices were "restored" to their earlier pristine forms and place names were altered again and again as Wang's belief in the magic symbolism of names led him to restructure the political reality of his time. The structures of authority, in the purification of names of offices and in the creation of countless fiefs, bewildered and bemused officials and commoners. The values were not those commonly accepted, the norms were often disregarded, and the structures of authority became chaotic. Wang Mang's attempt to return China to its pre-imperial past was an utter failure.

Wang Mang, in spite of his conspicuous lack of success in founding a thorough-going Confucian dynasty, must be credited with the development of the idea of abdication, an idea that was to be of immense political significance for the next thousand years of Chinese history. Many procedures had, of course, been developed for the operation of the bureaucratic state, but no orderly procedure existed for the transmission of political power from one ruling house to the next. Conquest and its accompanying disorder, chaos, and civil war had been the means of effecting the transfer of the throne from the Ch'in to Han and, in earlier cases, from the Hsia to the Shang and the Shang to the Chou. The *Book of Documents* contained a peaceful alternative, viz., abdication from a ruler in one family to a ruler in another family. Wang Mang applied this model when he supplanted the Han. This normative pattern was the approved way of founding a dynasty from the fall of the Han (the last Later Han ruler, Emperor Hsien, proffered, *hsien*, the throne to the Ts'ao family) to the rise of the Sung dynasty in 960. Abdication was not the sole symbolic or rhetorical device used in these dynastic foundings. Abdication occurred only after the stage had been adequately set; for example, the recipient of the throne invariably received (read: granted to himself) promotions to approved positions, the most elevated of which were not normally occupied by anyone, and he acknowledged the appearance of omens and other manifestations of his selection by God (T'ien). Only then was the abdication ceremony conducted and the new regime installed.

As Carl Leban's articles show (one in this volume and one in Roy and Tsien, eds. *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization*), the build-up to the abdication could be a lengthy process that went on for several years and even for decades. The cautious preparation for the transfer of the throne to a new ruling house was more characteristic of the earlier periods than for the later dynastic foundings. By the time of the founding of the Sung, abdication and a formal abdication document was little more than an afterthought. The symbolism had lost its potency. But in the earlier eras, abdication provided a solution to a major problem: how to create a new dynasty without plunging the world into disorder.

Underlying the notion of abdication was the even more fundamental idea of merit; the throne had to be earned and the individual who sought to take the throne had to prove that he was a suitable candidate for it. It was possible to suggest a candidate (even oneself) to determine whether or not one's colleagues and other holders of power thought that one was suitable (see Leban, "Managing," *Ancient China*, 338-339). If the suggestion were not well-received then the one who made it might be executed for offering the treasonous advice. But the successful cases reveal a series of steps upward in the hierarchy with increasing numbers of revelations, omens or other signs of God's approval. The final step to the throne was taken, not by a rebel but by a person who had proven himself in a variety of positions, a person who had established his merit. Thus receipt of the outgoing dynasty's abdication and accession to

the throne was a relatively small move to the next highest but ultimate level of a well-marked route.

The last example of abdication among the cases of legitimation presented here involves not the founding of a new dynasty but the justification of a usurpation within the Ming ruling house, namely the Yung-lo emperor's seizure of the throne from his nephew. Neither the Yung-lo emperor nor his contemporaries availed themselves of the idea of abdication to justify the seizure of the throne. Rather, the concept of abdication was invoked in an ideological sense, as opposed to the structural sense, to explain long after the usurpation what was then a firmly established *fait accompli*. Thus, from a procedural pattern with predictable results before the actual founding of dynasty this concept was transformed into an ideological symbol which could be applied in a historiographical and retroactive manner in order to explain what had already occurred.

Efficacy and efficiency are at best implicit in Easton's analysis of legitimation; he does not elevate the idea to the position that it deserves. When Easton refers to the "implementing of decisions" we may understand him to be referring to efficacy. Regardless of the sources of legitimacy, a regime that is perceived as fully legitimate will be able to withstand reverses and to fail in certain areas without having its legitimacy seriously questioned. But if the reverses and failures continue to build, the regime's legitimacy will begin to crumble. Finally, as in the case of the Former Han, for example, much of the populace or the relevant populace will begin to feel that the regime should be superseded. Attitudes of this type were clearly present in the years immediately preceding Wang Mang's rise to power.

What is sometimes overlooked is that a person who under normal circumstances would not be expected to fill the role of ruler may, because of his or her efficacy, be granted a grudging legitimacy. Such seems to have been the case with Empress Lü, the widow of Han Kao-tsu. The ministers at her court, largely the same ministers who had served her late husband, might have dislodged her. But the cost would have been inordinately high; the attempt would perhaps have led to a new eruption of civil war. I imagine that these were some of the considerations entertained by her ministers. In addition, there was the overriding reality of her skills as a ruler. Thus, until the situation indicated that her family aimed at seizing the throne, there was little need to move against them.

The situation regarding Empress Wu Tse-t'ien is more complex but on the issue of efficacy remarkably similar. She and her husband, T'ang Kao-tsung, had shared power for many years before his death; she had played an important political role during his periods of illness; she was clearly recognized as a competent ruler before she seized power in her own name. That ideology did not accommodate a woman on the throne was largely irrelevant; her effectiveness as a ruler proved far more important than Confucian ideological positions regarding women in politics.

One final point regarding the structural sources of legitimation may be introduced, even though it is not pursued in the papers. The one specific example derives from the T'ang but other examples could undoubtedly be cited (e.g., the law of the Sung period). Long accepted and therefore familiar structures of authority may be maintained, even though they have little institutional role or functional need, because by doing so the regime derives some legitimacy from the legitimacy that was already attached to those institutions. The T'ang central government maintained the Nine Courts, in addition to the Six Boards, because the Courts had existed in the Han (under the name of Nine Highest Ministers) and the Han provided the model which the T'ang rulers explicitly emulated. The functions of most of the Nine Courts were, at best, minimal, and I therefore conclude that the symbolic value of these institutions was much greater than any bureaucratic value they may have had.

In sum, structural legitimation helps to account for some unexpected successes in Chinese history (e.g., Empress Wu Tse-t'ien) as well as for some of the high level of structural continuity that is so much a striking feature of Chinese history. The role of structural legitimation relative to that of the ideological is also of major significance. In spite of the amount of attention, one might say, the inordinate amount of attention, that has been devoted to Chinese intellectual history and by extension to ideology, these findings suggest that structural sources of legitimation (which admittedly overlap in the normative realm with ideology) richly deserve more attention. Dynasty after dynasty sought to enhance its own legitimation by replicating the previously accepted norms and structures; in many ways regimes found themselves in an institutional trap (a high level institutional trap?), a trap that was particularly relevant when reforms were attempted. The trap was rarely sundered; such drastic action was possible only when the forces for change were manipulated by a leader of outstanding personal qualities.

Personal Sources of Legitimation

Personal legitimacy derives from the leadership capabilities of the individual concerned. It includes, but is not limited to Weber's notion of charisma about which something will be said in later parts of this work. Leadership qualities are consistently important in any political system, but in our concern they warrant special attention because of several factors, all associated with the rise of a new regime and its legitimation or moderate change that is essential in the ongoing process of legitimacy maintenance in any regime. Our focus has been on the first, but some attention has also been devoted to the second.

Whereas authorities, as noted above, derive their legitimacy from adherence to the established norms and values of the regime, and are seen as exercising their leadership within those norms and values, the kind of leadership we deal with here derives from the behavior and personality of the individual. These qualities will be of such commanding importance that they may allow the leader to violate the established norms and values and procedures; his followers will be convinced that the leader's personal merit and moral worth confer such legitimacy on him as to allow him to create a new regime.

Maintaining legitimacy is an endless process. Established regimes can count on their continuous successes and on ceremonies and rituals as means by which they remind the young who are entering the group of adults of the society as well as those adults who might otherwise develop wayward inclinations of the legitimacy of the regime. But any regime may be faced with challenges that reduce its abilities to maintain its legitimacy. Such challenges may be sudden shocks such as catastrophic disasters and foreign invasions or gradual decline that may accompany a population growth that slowly reduces the resources of the society and economy. Under such circumstances, strong leaders may appear who do not found new regimes but who reinvigorate the then current regime. Reformers of course fit this category. Traditional Chinese statesmen and scholars were familiar with the phenomenon and customarily refer to it as a "restoration" (*chung-hsing*
), but we should note that major reformers (such as Wang Mang, Wang An-shih, and Chia Ssu-tao) are usually not associated with a "restoration" and that "restorations" invariably focus attention on the ruler himself. They are similar, however, in that both depend upon individual leadership qualities and neither leads to the establishment of a new regime.

Personal legitimation is sometimes looked upon as creating both a solution and problem. It is instrumental in solving the question of how to reestablish order, often a new order or at least an order that introduces distinctive elements into an older order. The problem that allegedly arises is when it becomes

necessary to convert personal legitimacy into a form of legitimacy that transcends the individual leader. Chinese cases suggest that this was not a problem.

The transformation from personal legitimation is not as great as the change to personal legitimation. The leader who creates a regime based upon personal legitimacy will, under ordinary circumstances, have left a legacy that includes the basic features of structural legitimacy. His successors will thus be able to rely upon the lower scale leadership capabilities of his followers--followers who hold legitimate positions in the structures he has created-- in maintaining themselves. Furthermore, to the extent that the founder, i.e., the one who relied upon personal legitimation, embodied or exemplified an ideology then his successors can also rely upon that ideology, even in those cases in which the ideology lacks clear articulation. But, having noted some factors that facilitate the transformation of personal legitimacy into more stable forms of legitimacy, we must also note that the transition was not an easy one in most periods in Chinese history.

Major dynasties in Chinese history, almost without exception, suffered a succession problem, a problem in legitimacy, with the death of the founder. If we may accept the uncertain record of the Shang founding, the pattern begins with the first historically and archeologically attested dynasty in Chinese history. With the death of Ch'eng-T'ang, the Shang founder, the nascent young dynasty was held together by I Yin, the chancellor, during the next few short reigns, and it was not until after I Yin had incarcerated a Shang king for a period of study and reflection that the dynasty was in the hands of a competent ruler and securely founded. In a somewhat similar case, the Duke of Chou prevented a usurpation of the recently established Chou throne and held royal power until the young King Ch'eng reached his majority. The Han throne passed from Kao-tsu to his son, but the latter was weak and was finally succeeded after his death by his mother, Kao-tsu's widow. The second T'ang ruler was able to ascend the throne only because he killed his older brother (the heir apparent) and forced his father to retire. The Sung founder was followed by his brother instead of his young son. The second paper presented here on the Ming dynasty demonstrates the inordinate historiographic lengths to which early Ming figures went in order to justify the usurpation by the third Ming ruler. Does the pattern that emerges from this long history mean that dynastic founders, as a rule, had difficulty leaving a legacy of legitimated dynasties? Did they fail to convert their personal legitimacy into a combination of ideological and structural legitimacy? Although the data presented in the accompanying articles do not provide conclusive answers they do allow some suggestive and tentative responses to these questions.

The Chinese dynastic experience suggests that a case of personal legitimation must be followed by someone of near-comparable leadership characteristics and, frequently, of the same generation. A dynastic founder typically created a regime that was so adequately structurally legitimated that if his successor attempted to alter that structural legitimacy he was overthrown (or, charges that he was altering the inherited structural legitimacy warranted his overthrow). Additionally, generational factors seem to have been involved. For reasons that are not entirely clear, a personally legitimated dynastic founder will be followed by a second powerful ruler who completes the founding of the regime. In those cases in which a youngster or other weak figure would have followed the founder to the throne or did, in fact, follow the founder, the succession did not occur or was not maintainted in the prescribed manner. In the Han and Ming cases, the second rulers were inclined to be less demanding and less commanding than the founders; they showed a distinct tendency to retreat from the powerful positions created by the founder. Certainly in the Ming case and probably in the Han case, the second rulers sought to alter the institutional patterns, the structural legitimacy, that the founders had created. The dialectic that was set in motion by these second emperors was then reversed by those who seized power and took the throne. The succession to the Sung founder seems to have been altered to prevent the possibility of change from arising had the

founder's son been designated heir. The T'ang case is aberrational in that the heir apparent was killed and the founder forced into retirement by the second emperor, T'ai-tsung, but the case is less aberrational when we note that T'ai-tsung made himself out to be the real inspiration and power behind the founding of the dynasty. What these cases generally suggest is not that there was a crisis in transforming the personal legitimacy of the founder into structural legitimacy but that the crisis occurred because of the perceived threat to the structural legitimacy created by the founder. Several inferences may be drawn here. First, these founders do not appear as charismatic figures. The issue of charismatic leadership is developed at some length in later portions of this work; for now we simply note that in the absence of claims of charisma, we are not confronted with the problem of transformation of charismatic to some other kind of legitimacy. Second, these founders were perceived as (or credited with) having created an institutional order, i.e., a structural legitimacy, that was binding on their successors. The implicit emphasis was on the founding of a dynasty, not merely the political success of the individual who had managed to ascend the throne.

Personal legitimation may occur in a great variety of ideological or structural situations; its principal characteristic is that it overrides such situations and grants the leader a license for freedom of action that otherwise would be impossible. The question that might be asked in the Chinese context is, In what way does filial piety manifest itself in personal legitimation? or the question could be formulated: does personal legitimation take on any specific characteristics when it occurs in a society in which filial piety is a prime value? The question assumes, of course, that filial piety was perennially a major value in Chinese society but was less significant in other societies.

Many of the cases noted in the preceding pages suggest that filial piety made little difference in personal legitimation and was, in historical practice, explicitly disregarded on numerous occasions. We may note that since the allegiance owed by a Chinese minister or subject to his ruler was an extrapolation of the filial loyalty he owed his father, then every case of attack on a reigning dynasty was a violation of filial piety. More specifically, Han Kao-tsu's widow may be seen as violating the norms of filial piety in seizing power for herself and her family at the expense of Kao-tsu's son and successor. T'ang T'ai-tsung was responsible for the death of his older brother, the heir designate, and for his father's retirement. The son of the founder of the Sung dynasty was shunted aside in favor of the founder's brother, thus creating a case in which the second brother precluded a filial succession of the young son of the founder. The Ming dynasty experience included a civil war in which the second Ming emperor was overthrown and in which the Yung-lo emperor cast aside filial principles of obedience and succession. It is thus clear that the second Son of Heaven of a given dynasty did not have to be the designated first son of the founder, just as it is clear that the throne did not have to pass to a son of the preceding ruler in order to maintain a dynasty, for many rulers died without sons; in such cases the throne passed to other members of the imperial family.

There is, however, one important case, the Sung, in which ideas deriving from filial piety help to legitimate an unusual institutional situation. The fundamental question was how to explain (i.e., legitimate) two emperors within the realm of Chinese political culture. The answer was based upon a simple verifiable social phenomenon: a father may have two sons. Rulers of the Sung and the Liao dynasties were brothers, political sons of the same Heavenly father. The biologically oldest "son" was addressed by the other son as his "older brother" and when succession brought a new ruler to the throne in either polity his biological age determined his political status vis-à-vis the other. The younger brother was expected to behave in a ritualistically appropriate manner, showing the proper filial deference, to his older sibling. In this context, personal legitimation is not a function of the leadership qualities of the individual concerned; rather, it is personal in a familial context. Quite obviously this line of argument

does not rest exclusively on the definition of personal legitimacy outlined above, for there are elements in the Sung case of ideological and also of structural legitimacy. The ideological element is present in the concept of filial piety as a basic value on which both Sung and Liao rulers could agree; it provided the intellectual framework within which they could develop positions that mirrored the political conditions in which they ruled. Structural legitimacy existed in this dualistic political situation in that both the Sung and the Liao created regimes within the familiar and accepted values, norms and procedures that were appropriate to the age. In a related case, the Chin rulers, though foreigners, were lauded by subjects of the Sung; their regimes and the authorities within them fulfilled the expectations of structural legitimacy.

Traditional, ideological, structural, and personal legitimation may be distinguished from each other for analytical purposes, as we have done here. But in any one case, all four elements will be present. Cases will differ one from another on the basis of the changing weight assigned to different elements. We shall now delve into the cases introduced here, and draw upon others as well, in order to focus attention on the complex relationships within each case and in order to show that over long periods of time there are major changes of a permanent nature in the relative importance of each of the four types of legitimation.