

MULTICULTURAL CHINA

IN 552, EVERYONE MUST HAVE EXPECTED A TURKISH INVASION OF CHINA... BUT THEN THE TURKISH KINGDOM SPLIT IN TWO, AND ALL CHINA SIGHED WITH RELIEF.

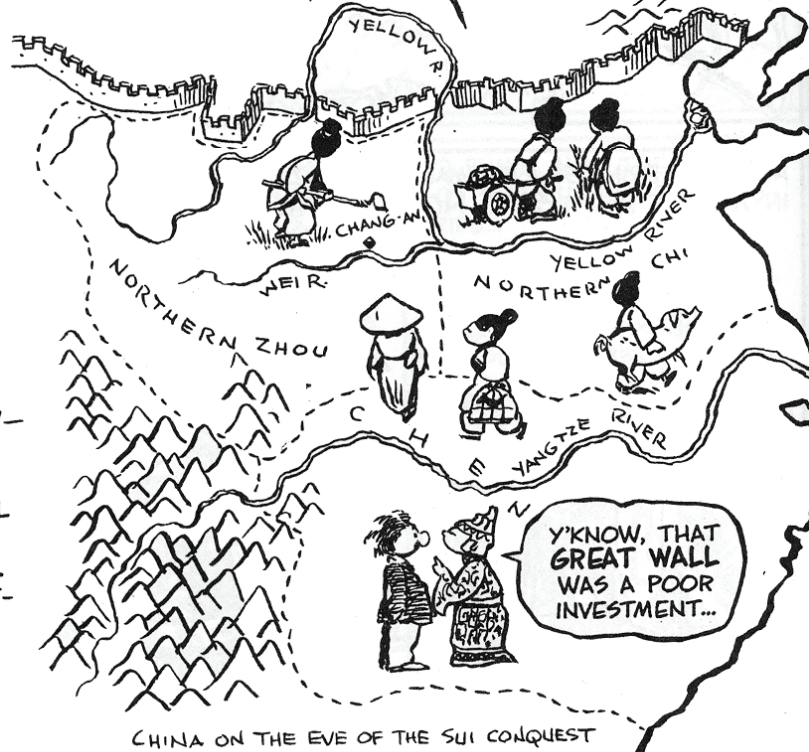


EASTERN TURKISTAN SQUABBLED WITH WESTERN TURKISTAN... THE CHINESE EGGED THEM ON... AND IN 581, THE TURKS WENT TO WAR WITH EACH OTHER.



SAFE FROM THE TURKS—FOR NOW—CHINESE WARLORDS BEGAN FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES... ONE CONQUERED ANOTHER... UNTIL AT LAST, IN 589, ONE OF THEM, FAMILY NAME **YANG**, RULED **ALL CHINA** AND FOUNDED THE SHORT-LIVED (BUT IMPORTANT)

SUI DYNASTY.



CHINA ON THE EVE OF THE SUI CONQUEST

THE FIRST EMPEROR SUI, SEEING A RAVAGED LAND FULL OF PEOPLE RUINED BY WAR, CUT BACK ON LUXURY AND COMMANDED HIS NOBLES TO EASE UP ON THE PEASANTS.



SO THE NOBLES PROMPTLY KILLED HIM AND REPLACED HIM WITH HIS SON, A MORE GENEROUS PERSON.



SECOND EMPEROR SUI, A BIG SPENDER WITH BIG PLANS, SUITED THE NOBLES MUCH BETTER—AT FIRST.



ONE WOULD-BE REBEL, LI SHIH-MIN, HAD A SPECIAL PROBLEM: HE WAS ONLY **SIXTEEN** YEARS OLD, AND HIS FATHER, THE GOVERNOR OF AN IMPORTANT PROVINCE, REMAINED LOYAL TO THE EMPEROR.

DAD! THE TIME IS RIGHT! THE EMPIRE CAN BE OURS! COME ON! WHY WAIT?



EVERYTHING ALWAYS GOES WRONG, SON... ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THIS...



AND SO, THE **ENTIRE LI FAMILY** ROSE IN REVOLT—WITH LI SHIH-MIN NUDGING THEM ALONG!

RELAX, DAD! DON'T YOU WANT TO BE **EMPEROR**?

SIGH... DO I?



THE LI FAMILY, CHINESE ON THE FATHER'S SIDE, HAD MARRIED MANY **TURKISH WIVES**—LI SHIH-MIN'S MOTHER, FOR ONE... SO, THROUGH THE IN-LAWS, THE LI CALLED UP **TURKISH TROOPS** FOR THEIR ARMY.

TWO CENTURIES BEFORE BAGHDAD'S TURKISH GUARD!



THE TEENAGER ADVISED THEM TO STAY IN THE MOUNTAINS WHILE A DOZEN OTHER REBEL ARMIES WORE THEMSELVES OUT IN THE PLAINS. HE KNEW HISTORY!

THIS IS HOW THE HAN DYNASTY STARTED...



IN 618, THE BOY, NOW 21 YEARS OLD, GAVE THE WORD, AND OUT THEY CAME. WITHIN FIVE YEARS, THEY CONTROLLED CHINA, NORTH AND SOUTH.

SEE, DAD, ISN'T THIS COOL?



AND SO, THANKS TO LI SHIH-MIN'S STRATEGY AND DARING, BEGAN THE **TANG DYNASTY**. HIS FATHER WAS EMPEROR, AND HIS BROTHERS WERE FILLED WITH ENVY!

IS IT RIGHT THAT A YOUNGER BROTHER SHOULD HAVE MORE HONOR THAN THE ELDER?

NOT EVEN IF THE ELDER IS A MORON!



THE BROTHERS, IN FACT, RAISED AN ARMY TO ATTACK LI SHIH-MIN. BIG MISTAKE! HE KILLED ALL OF THEM, ALONG WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

BUT WHAT ABOUT FAMILY FEELING?

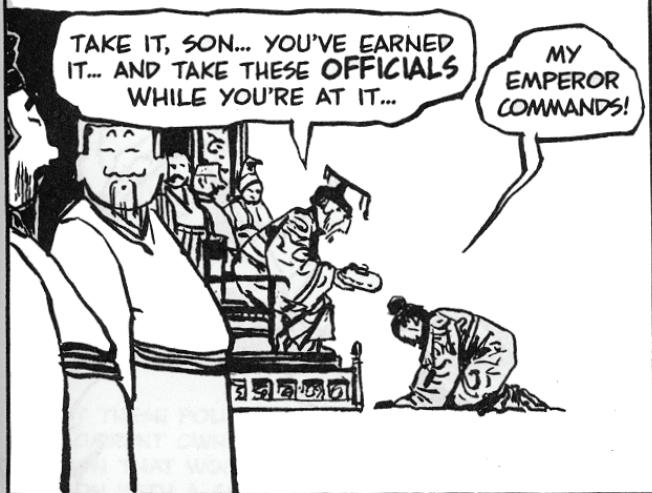
NOT ALWAYS POSITIVE, IS IT?



SOON AFTERWARD, HIS DESPONDENT DAD STEPPED DOWN... LI SHIH-MIN TOOK THE THRONE AND A NEW NAME, **TAI-TSUNG**, AND BECAME CHINA'S GREATEST EMPEROR.

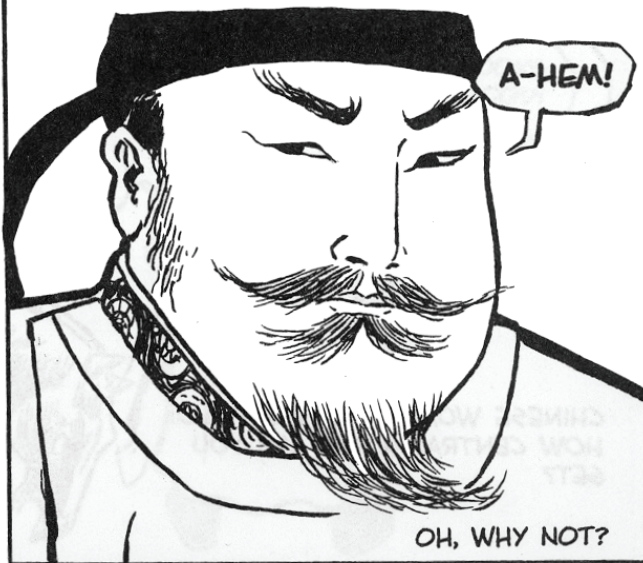
TAKE IT, SON... YOU'VE EARNED IT... AND TAKE THESE **OFFICIALS** WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...

MY EMPEROR COMMANDS!



WOULD THIS BE A GOOD TIME TO CONSIDER THE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE?

A-HEM!

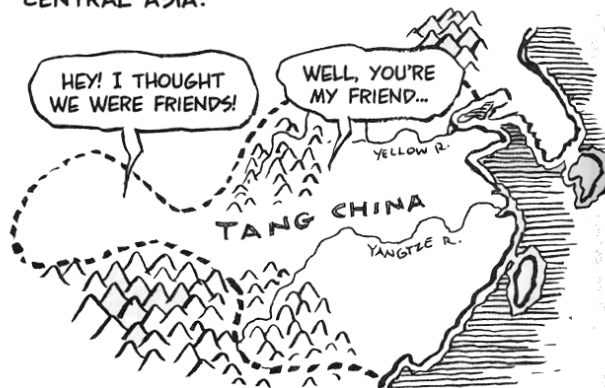


OH, WHY NOT?



TAI-TSUNG IN IMPERIAL DRAGON ROBE, FROM A LARGER-THAN-LIFE-SIZED PORTRAIT

THE HALF-TURKISH TAI-TSUNG BROUGHT A MILLION TURKS INTO CHINA, APPOINTED TURKISH OFFICIALS, RECRUITED TURKS FOR THE ARMY—AND USED THAT ARMY TO SMASH THE EASTERN TURKISH KINGDOM AND ATTACK THE WEST, PUSHING CHINESE POWER FAR INTO CENTRAL ASIA.



THE TANG RAN A MULTICULTURAL EMPIRE, WELCOMING NOT ONLY TURKS BUT ALSO COMMUNITIES OF KOREANS, INDIANS, PERSIANS, ARABS, AND JEWS TO CHINA... GOODS AND IDEAS MOVED BACK AND FORTH BY SHIP AND CAMEL.



CHINESE WOMEN PLAYING POLO! HOW CENTRAL ASIAN CAN YOU GET?

WITHIN CHINA, TAI-TSUNG TOOK STEPS TO BREAK THE POWER OF THE GREAT LANDLORDS. HE KNEW THEY WERE TROUBLE—HE USED TO BE ONE HIMSELF!



TAI-TSUNG'S LAND REFORM PROGRAM BROKE UP GREAT ESTATES (ESPECIALLY THE ONES BELONGING TO HIS ENEMIES) AND PARCELED OUT THE LAND TO THE PEASANTS WHO WORKED IT. NOWADAYS, POLITICIANS OFTEN SAY THAT LAND REFORM "DOESN'T WORK," THAT THE NEW OWNERS JUST LOSE THEIR LAND ANYWAY, SO WHY BOTHER?* LET'S ASK THIS CHINESE PEASANT'S OPINION...



TO STAFF THE ADMINISTRATION WITH LOYAL, EDUCATED PUBLIC SERVANTS RATHER THAN SCHEMING WARLORDS' SONS, TAI-TSUNG BROUGHT BACK THE NATIONAL EXAMS. TO GET A GOVERNMENT JOB, YOU HAD TO ACE A STANDARDIZED TEST OPEN TO ALL.



BLOODTHIRSTY BARONS ALL BUT VANISHED... THE LAND WAS AT PEACE... THE ARMY ALMOST INVISIBLE, MAINLY POSTED TO THE FRONTIER TO INTIMIDATE FOREIGNERS...



TAI-TSUNG'S POLICIES WENT ON SUCCESSFULLY UNDER TWO LONG-LIVED SUCCESSORS: FIRST, EMPRESS WU, THE ONLY OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED WOMAN EMPEROR IN CHINESE HISTORY (REIGNED JOINTLY WITH HER HUSBAND 670-683 AND SOLO 690-705)...



AND DON'T FORGET US!!

THEN CAME EMPEROR MING HUANG (REIGNED 715-756), A PARTY ANIMAL, BUT A GOOD RULER MOST OF THE TIME, AND CHINA PROSPERED AS NEVER BEFORE.

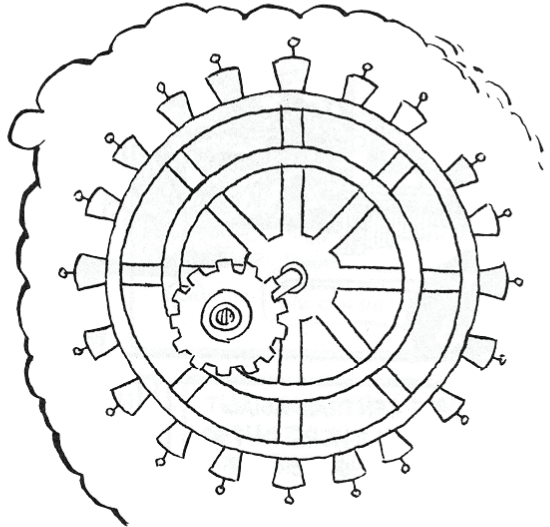
OH, YES... CREDIT ALSO GOES TO THE THOUSANDS OF DEDICATED CIVIL SERVANTS—COMMISSIONERS, INSPECTORS, CANAL-KEEPERS, POSTAL WORKERS, JUDGES, TAX COLLECTORS—WHO ADMINISTERED THE LAWS FAIRLY TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY!!



CHINESE HISTORIANS REFER TO THIS PERIOD, ESPECIALLY THE EARLY 700s, AS THE "FULLNESS OF TANG."



BUDDHISM GREW UNDER EMPRESS WU, AND SOON PEOPLE ALL ACROSS CHINA WERE MEDITATING, NOT ALWAYS ABOUT SPIRITUAL THINGS. IN 723, A BUDDHIST MONK DREAMED UP THE WORLD'S FIRST **CLOCK** (OR MORE PRECISELY, THE ESCAPEMENT MECHANISM THAT TURNS THE GEARS IN TICK-TOCK JUMPS).



THESE EARLY CHINESE CLOCKS WERE BUILT AS **ASTRONOMICAL TOOLS**, MODELS OF THE ROTATING SKY, COMPLETE WITH MECHANICAL FIGURES BEATING ALARM GONGS AT INTERVALS.

WATER FLOWED INTO BUCKETS MOUNTED ON THE RIM OF A LARGE WHEEL AS EACH BUCKET FILLED IN TURN, THE WHEEL ADVANCED. (THE LOCKING MECHANISM IS NOT PICTURED.)



THE FULLNESS WAS FULL OF OTHER INVENTIONS AS WELL, SUCH AS MASS-MARKET **PORCELAIN**, THE FIRST SEAWORTHY **COMPASS**, AND THE FIRST **PRINTED BOOKS**.

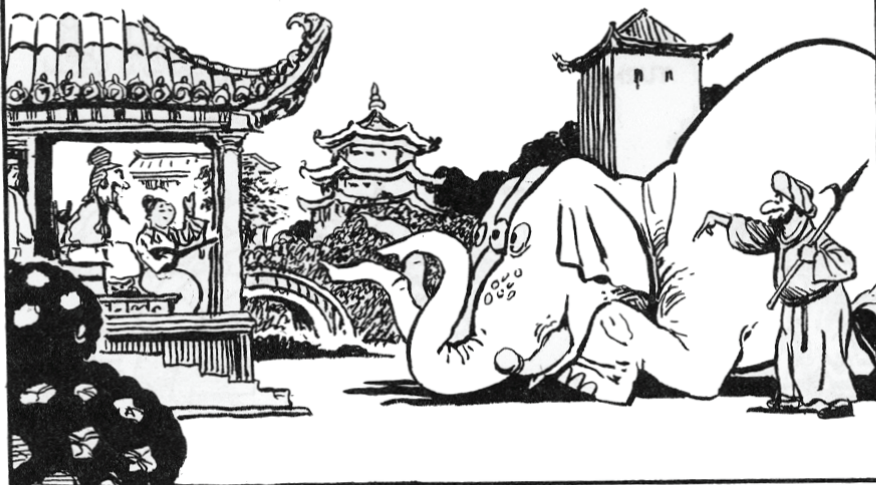


PRINTED EXAMS, TOO!

THERE WAS CREATION AND **PROCREATION**, TOO... POPULATION DOUBLED FROM TAI-TSUNG'S DAY, REACHING A GRAND TOTAL OF EXACTLY **52,880,488**, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL CENSUS COUNT OF 754.



EVERYTHING WAS SO FINE, EMPEROR MING HUANG LEFT OFF GOVERNING AND PARTIED FULL-TIME WITH POETS, ACTORS, AND SOME ELEPHANTS THAT BOWED ONLY TO THE EMPEROR. BESIDE HIM ALWAYS WAS LADY YANG GUEI-FEI ("CONCUBINE YANG"), HIS FAVORITE.



YANG GUEI-FEI HAD A FAVORITE, TOO: AN LU-SHAN, A GENERAL FROM A CENTRAL ASIAN FAMILY.



SPEAKING OF CENTRAL ASIA... TROUBLE BEGAN THERE IN 750, WHEN A CHINESE GOVERNOR EXECUTED SOME TURKS IN FAR-OFF TASHKENT... THE TURKS, SEEKING REVENGE, ASKED THE MUSLIMS OF PERSIA FOR HELP, AND SOON...



IN 751, A CHINESE ARMY MET THE ARAB-PERSIAN-TURKISH FORCE IN THE BATTLE OF THE TALAS RIVER.



IN THAT ONE DAY, CHINA LOST ITS HOLD ON CENTRAL ASIA (AND THE MUSLIMS GOT THE RECIPE FOR PAPER-MAKING!).



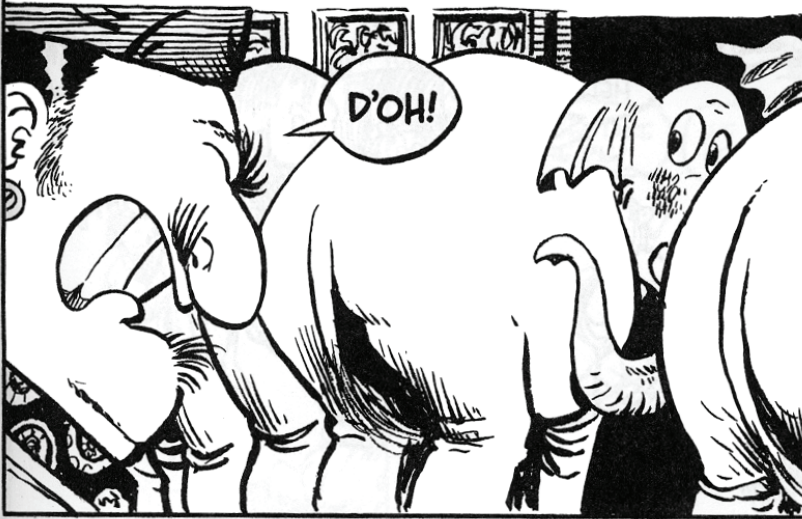
BUT WHY WORRY? CHINA COULD ALWAYS WIN IT BACK! THE EMPEROR WAS RELAXED... VERY RELAXED...



THE EMPEROR DID SO LITTLE, IN FACT, THAT GENERAL AN LU-SHAN DECIDED TO SAVE THE EMPIRE HIMSELF! HE ATTACKED THE CAPITAL, PUTTING THE IMPERIAL FAMILY TO FLIGHT.



TAKING THE CITY IN 755, AN LU-SHAN MARCHED INTO THE PALACE AND ORDERED THE **DANCING ELEPHANTS** TO BOW DOWN TO HIM. THEY NERVOUSLY REFUSED.



WHILE AN LU-SHAN VENTED HIS IRE ON THE PITIFUL PACHYDERMS, THE EMPEROR'S SON RALLIED SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. HE TURNED FOR HELP TO ANOTHER TURKISH PEOPLE, THE MUSICALLY-NAMED **UIGHURS** ("WEE-GURS"), WHO HAD RECENTLY CONQUERED MONGOLIA.



A UIGHUR ARMY CAME DOWN, CRUSHED AN LU-SHAN, AND MADE MING HUANG'S SON CHINA'S NEW RULER.



FOR HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REBEL, **YANG GUEI-FEI** LOST HER HEAD, WHICH INSPIRED NO END OF POEMS* AND DRAMAS.



THE TANG STILL HAD ITS DYNASTY, BUT THE FULLNESS HAD EMPTIED OUT IN ONE GREAT GUSH.



MEANWHILE, CHINA HAD MONEY TROUBLE.

WELL, WE HAVE TROUBLE, ANYWAY...



IN TAI-TSUNG'S DAY, FARMERS PAID TAXES IN THE FORM OF GRAIN OR LABOR, BUT IN 780 THE GOVERNMENT SUDDENLY DEMANDED CASH ONLY, WHICH SEEMED MORE BUSINESSLIKE SOMEHOW.

PLEASE! TAKE THE PIG!

WE DON'T DO COMMODITIES.



COUNTLESS PENNILESS PEASANTS LOST THEIR LAND.



THE GOVERNMENT BLAMED THE MONEY SHORTAGE ON FOREIGNERS.

GRASPING MERCHANTS!

BUDDHISTS, WITH THEIR ALIEN IDEAS AND HUGE ASSETS...

GREEDY UIGHURS!

IT'S NOT OUR FAULT!



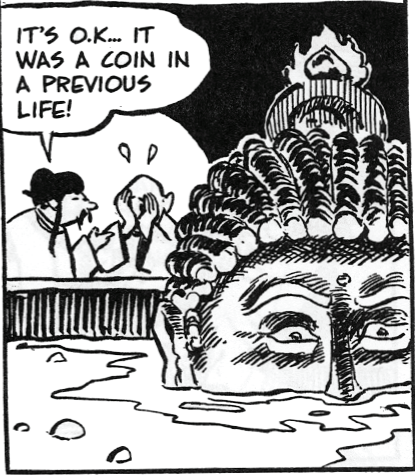
WHERE HAD THE MONEY GONE?

LET US PRAY FOR ENLIGHTENMENT BEFORE THIS LARGE, METALLIC STATUE OF—HEY... WAIT A MINUTE!!



IN 832, THE GOVERNMENT BEGAN SEIZING BUDDHIST BRONZES TO MELT DOWN FOR COINAGE.

IT'S O.K... IT WAS A COIN IN A PREVIOUS LIFE!



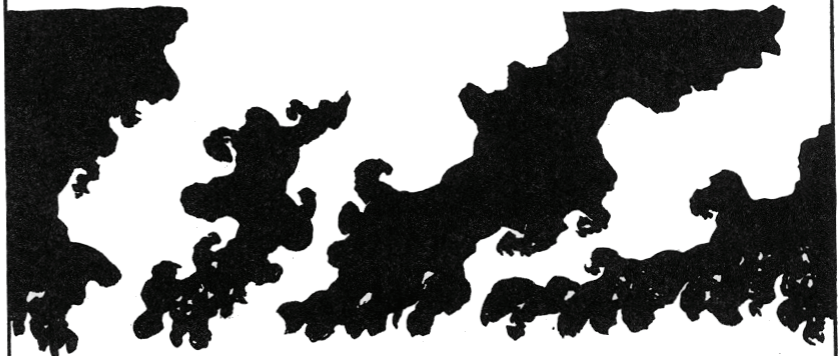
THERE WAS ENOUGH THERE TO KEEP THE NATION AFLOAT FOR ANOTHER 35 YEARS.

IT'S THE HALF-FULLNESS OF TANG!

OR THE HALF-EMPTYNESS, IF YOU'RE LIKE ME...



THEN CAME DROUGHT, LOCUSTS, FAMINE, AND A PEASANT REVOLT IN 870 THAT CHASED TANG FROM ITS CAPITALS AND GAVE THE LAND BACK TO THE PEOPLE. IN 879, REBELS SACKED CANTON'S MERCHANT COLONY AND KILLED 100,000 FOREIGNERS.



THE TANG DYNASTY HUNG ON FOR A FEW MORE YEARS BEFORE EXPIRING IN CHAOS AND CIVIL WAR IN 906.

BANG!

MEANWHILE, AFTER THE TANG FELL IN CHINA, CHAOS REIGNED... UNTIL, IN THE 960S AND '70S A NEW DYNASTY, THE **SUNG**, UNIFIED MOST OF CHINA—EXCEPT FOR PART OF THE NORTH RULED BY A MONGOLIAN PEOPLE, THE **KHITAI**.*



*FROM WHICH COMES "CATHAY."

AFTER 25 FRUITLESS YEARS OF TRYING TO CONQUER THE KHITAI, THE SUNG EMPERORS IN 1004 MADE PEACE AND BEGAN SENDING THEM A YEARLY PAYMENT. MUCH CHEAPER!

BUT SIRE, THE NATIONAL HONOR!

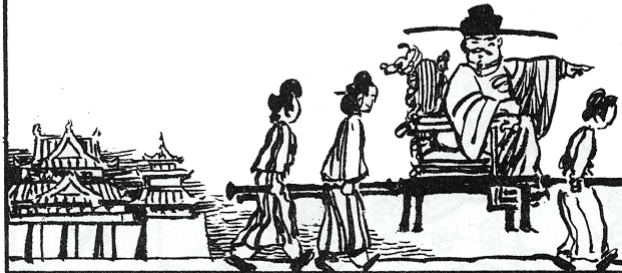
HERE'S HONOR: 3 MILLION CASH, DIVIDED BY 150 MILLION CASH = 2% OF THE BUDGET. IT'S DUCK FEED!



THE SUNG BROUGHT THIS CALCULATING SPIRIT TO EVERYTHING, WITH THE EMPERORS ACTING AS ACCOUNTANTS-IN-CHIEF...

LET'S SEE... SOUTH EASIER AND CHEAPER TO CONQUER... SOUTHERN RAW MATERIALS CHEAP... WE CAN SELL PRICEY MANUFACTURED GOODS TO THE NORTH... GET BACK THE 3 MILLION EASY...

FORWARD! TO THE SOUTH!



TO PROMOTE COMMERCE, THE SUNG PUT THE WORLD'S FIRST **PAPER MONEY** INTO PLAY.



PEOPLE HAVE ARGUED ABOUT ITS PROS AND CONS EVER SINCE...

IT'S MADE OF CHEAP STUFF WITH NO REAL VALUE!

THE "REAL" VALUE OF ALL MONEY IS WHAT PEOPLE AGREE IT'S WORTH!

WHAT IF THE GOVERNMENT STOPS BACKING THE PAPER?

THE STATE CAN PRINT AS MUCH AS IT LIKES, CHEAPENING MONEY!

METAL COMES AND GOES, TOO. PAPER FREES US FROM THE METAL SUPPLY!

IF GOVERNMENT FALLS, WE'RE ALL IN TROUBLE ANYWAY!



BUT FOR LONG-DISTANCE TRADE, WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER CARRY, A FEW BILLS OR A WAGON-LOAD OF **METAL**? NO CONTEST!



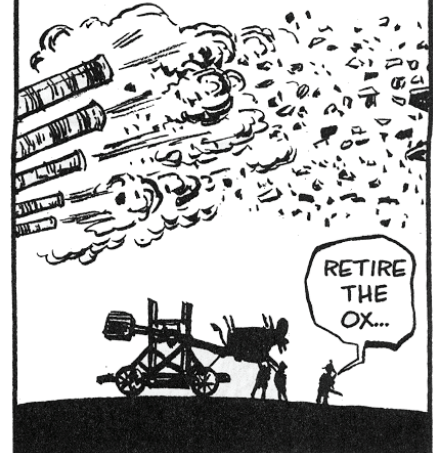
HALF THE SUNG BUDGET WENT TO THE **MILITARY**,* FUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF **EXPLOSIVES**... E.G., BOMBS FLUNG FROM CATAPULTS...



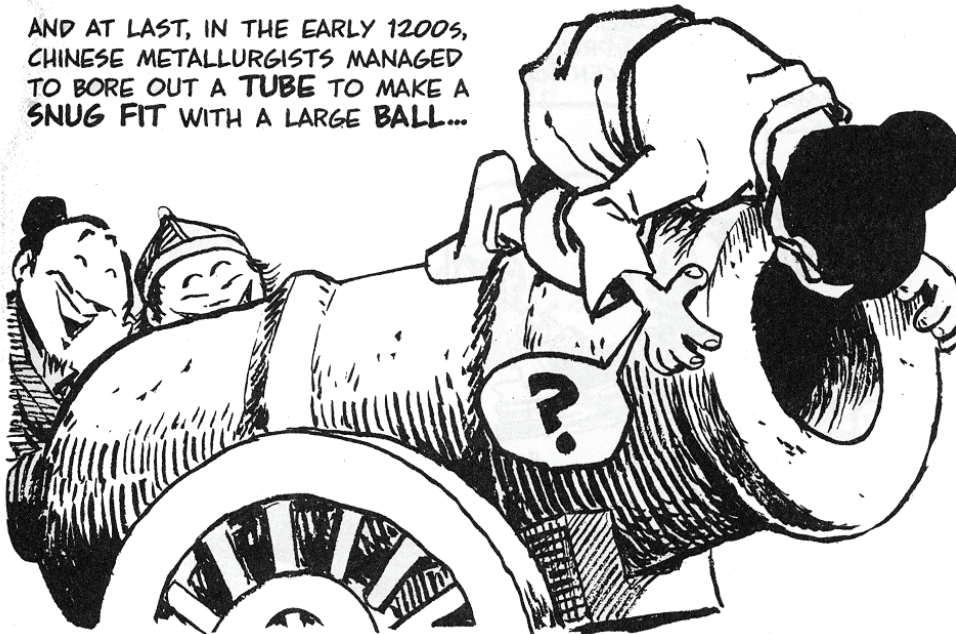
OR THE UNIQUELY CHINESE **FIRE OX**: STRAP A TUB OF EXPLOSIVES TO ITS BACK, GIVE IT A WHACK, AND HOPE IT KEEPS GOING FORWARD...



AND THEN THE FIRST **GUNS**: BAMBOO TUBES STUFFED WITH A POWDER CHARGE TOPPED WITH BROKEN CROCKERY THAT SPEWED OUT WHEN FIRED.



AND AT LAST, IN THE EARLY 1200s, CHINESE METALLURGISTS MANAGED TO BORE OUT A **TUBE** TO MAKE A **SNUG FIT** WITH A LARGE **BALL**...



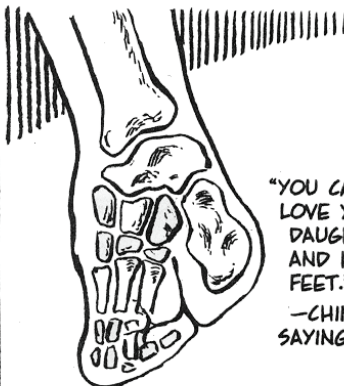
AND HERE WE MUST LEAVE CHINA FOR A WHILE...



THIS MILITARY ERA WAS ALSO AN AGE OF FEMALE HELPLESSNESS, WHEN CHINESE MOTHERS BEGAN BINDING THEIR DAUGHTERS' FEET. **FOOT-BINDING** FIRST GAINED A TOEHOLD IN TANG TIMES, WHEN A SLAVE-MASTER BOUND SOME DANCERS' FEET FOR A MINIATURE, ULTRA-FEMME EFFECT.



UNDER THE SUNG, ARISTOCRATS TOOK IT UP: MOTHERS VIED TO MAKE THEIR DAUGHTERS MORE DESIRABLE BY BINDING AND RE-BINDING THEIR FEET, BREAKING AND BENDING THE YOUNG BONES, FOLDING THE FOOT INTO A TINY CARICATURE OF THE REAL THING.



"YOU CAN'T LOVE YOUR DAUGHTER AND HER FEET."
—CHINESE SAYING

POETS RAVED ABOUT SEXY FEET: THE PETITE LOOK, EVEN THE FINE AND FUNKY AROMA OF THE BINDINGS! SOON COMMON PEOPLE WERE DOING IT TOO, AND SO FOR **NINE CENTURIES** (UNTIL THE PRACTICE ENDED IN THE 1900s) HALF OF CHINA WAS CRIPPLED.

